

'Buying Moments of Happiness': Luck, Time and Agency among Chinese Casino Players in London



Claire Loussouarn

Thesis submitted to the Department of Social Anthropology of Goldsmiths,
University of London, for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, London.

September 2010

Declaration

I certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the MPhil/PhD degree of Goldsmiths, University of London, is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case the extent of any work carried out jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it).

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. Quotation from it is permitted, provided that full acknowledgement is made. This thesis may not be reproduced without the prior written consent of the author.

I warrant that this authorisation does not, to the best of my belief, infringe the rights of any third party.

Abstract

This thesis explores how Chinese individuals experience social change as a result of migration and how this takes shape in the practice of casino gambling in the UK. In London, a high proportion of casino customers are of Chinese origin, especially in those casinos which are situated in the vicinity of Chinatown where I carried out fieldwork. In the thesis, the nature of this relationship is reconsidered as a mutual encounter against the political and economic background of the British gambling environment, a phenomenological description of gamblers' actions when they are gambling and an examination of how migration is experienced by different individuals.

The aim is to challenge the perception of gambling as an irrational activity which presupposes a restricted conception of time, economic rationality and success. As such, this thesis focuses on Chinese gamblers' ideas of luck, fate and greed and reflects on the different ideas of success that emerge from risk taking of various kinds including in business, through migration and last, but not least, in the casino. It demonstrates that the relationship between time and money cannot be assumed but must be reconsidered in situ through the way individuals create and experience different temporalities and rationalities via the circulation of money. The casino is a particularly illuminating place since the articulation of time and money is constructed in contrast with the notion of time discipline that dominates most other life rhythms. This means that even though the circulation of money and the flow of time may be suspended or slowed down in the aftermath of the migration journey, the space of the casino, with its contained spatio-temporality, still offers the opportunity to experience movement in a repeated and systematic manner.

To summarise, this thesis shows how Chinese people in London shape and re-shape their selves forming different temporalities and using various ways of exchanging money.

Marque de vitalité et vigueur,
Cette thèse est dédiée à mon père,
Et indirectement à tous ceux et celles
Qui l'aiment, l'entourent ou l'ont entouré,
Dans l'espoir qu'il redécouvre le goût à la vie.

Acknowledgements

In mirror to one of my arguments in Chapter 7 that achievements are socially produced, these acknowledgements testify that this thesis was enabled and developed through my interactions with certain individuals, the constant encouragement of others and the financial support of sponsors. It is the product of an eclectic bunch of social relationships all tied together in connection with me and what I made of them.

My greatest debt goes to all my research participants, the backbone of this thesis. Despite the fact that the aim of this research often escaped them and against the belief of many that their contributions were insignificant, they have been admirable guides to enlighten me about the issues at hand. I could never thank them enough for sharing their lives and thoughts with me.

I am also grateful to both the Economic Social Research Council and the Responsible Gambling Fund for funding this PhD research as part of Professor Rebecca Cassidy's award and for providing, as such, financial peace of mind.

A special thanks goes to Anna Cohen without whom there would not have been a thesis had she not made my destiny crossed the path of this incredible opportunity. Her fresh enthusiasm for anthropology convinced me back into a world I thought I had left behind forever. After writing this thesis, I'm not sure if I should call it luck, fate or something else, but I'm glad it happened!

The Gambling Research Network, the Goldsmiths writing up seminar, the LSE Inner and East Asia seminar and the different conferences ('Ethnography Beyond Anthropology': Interdisciplinary Perspectives on a Method Gone Public 2007, Living Cultures 2009, ASA 2009 annual conference, Anthropology in London day 2009, 'Calculated Risks': New Perspectives on Gambling 2009, EASA 2010 conference) where I had the opportunities to present my work all stimulated my thinking and helped me to shape my arguments more clearly. I thank heartily all participants and organisers.

I also benefited from insightful and pertinent comments made by Kim Baker, Sophie Day, Victoria Goddard, David Graeber, Keith Hart and Zhang Hui at various stages of

this thesis. Edward Simpson who was my second supervisor in the first year provided perceptive guidance in the early development of this PhD.

I'm deeply indebted to my proofreaders, Kim Baker, Anna Cohen, David Crear, Katrina Crear, Anna Lavis, Karen McColl and Elinor Middleton. Their meticulousness improved my thesis immeasurably and helped to clear up the most obscure passages in my original drafts. Liu Zhihong and Zhang Hui provided useful corrections and comments on translations of Chinese into English, and Ian Burke, a precious technical support on various computer matters for the making of this thesis.

Venturing into a PhD can be a lonely and painful undertaking. This was made less so thanks to the support and friendship of other PhD colleagues at Goldsmiths and elsewhere, most especially Kim Baker, Luna Glucksberg, Liu Zhihong and Zhang Hui. Although most of them never quite understood why I spent so much time working on this thesis and why it took so long, I want to thank all my 'Hackney friends' for just being around and providing necessary social breaks. There is no room to mention them all but they will recognise themselves (if they are curious enough to take a peek at this thesis!).

It has been a real pleasure to have Rebecca Cassidy as my supervisor during these four years of research and writing up. I owe her a great deal. Her enduring enthusiasm for the topic was a real source of inspiration while her positive encouragements provided invaluable support during the darkest times of this PhD. She never failed to reply promptly and in length to my work and needs. Most of all, under her supervision my ideas and the shape they take in this thesis have blossomed. This is due to her sharp-eyed talent of directing me where I wanted to go. I could not have hoped for a better mentor.

Ian Burke shared every little bit of my daily treadmill and my inexhaustible passion for the research. He provided a solid rock that I could grasp and peacefully run aground at times of tempestuous flutter. His abiding, radiant and loving strength was the best companion in this venture.

Table of contents

Illustrations	10
Introduction	
Unmaking the ‘Chinese gambler’	13
The Chinese gambler and the politics of problem gambling	14
Through the lens of gambling	19
The chapters	25
Chapter 1	
Appreciate the social qualities of gambling	28
Where is the field? Juggling between different spaces and temporalities	29
Make sense of the impalpable nature of gambling	36
Gambling as social exchange	40
Following the circulation of money and its multiple movements	44
Gambling, managing risk and the construction of economic rationality	47
The individual and social mobility in China and beyond	52
Conclusion	56
Chapter 2	
Being Chinese in London	57
Ildigo: not fitting in the box	59
The idea of a Chinese community	62
‘Histories’ of Chinese migration to the UK: a family history and migration waves	66
Chinese cocklers, accountancy students and City traders	75
Beyond sub-divisions	85
Conclusion	91
Chapter 3	
Gamblers’ rhythms	94
Beyond the narrative of a rational time	95

A multitude of opportunities to win	99
Playing for time	103
Stopping when you are winning	110
Clashes of rhythms; or the arbitrary distinction of productive and non-productive times	113
Conclusion	118
 Chapter 4	
Speculating on the future: shaping the present	120
Doing business in the catering industry: hidden stories behind success	122
This hero, the entrepreneur: a story of shared modernity	127
The social life of risk: becoming through action	131
Moving away, up and forward or refusing to be stuck behind	134
Re-interpreting failure	139
Beyond a linear and steady progression towards success	144
Conclusion	147
 Chapter 5	
Rethinking the casino space as dynamic	149
Casinos in London: history, legislation and urban architecture	152
Casino design and marketing: channelling consumers' desires	161
Seducing Chinese customers: marketing competition in Leicester Square	168
Whose space?	172
Who needs a clock when gambling?	185
Conclusion	191
 Chapter 6	
Winning today and tomorrow: the constant quest for luck in the Casino	194
The ambivalent nature of luck: between fixity and mobility	196
The morality of worth: to be lucky is to be deserving	201
Better to be lucky than hard working: the inequalities of luck	206
Creating the opportunities to be lucky	210

Conclusion	217
Chapter 7	
Being greedy in the casino: a vain desire for money?	220
Greed: an unjustified or legitimate desire to grow?	222
The myth of Tantalus' enigma	228
Keep the money flowing	230
Connecting, disconnecting and the ongoing circulation of money	240
Conclusion	249
Conclusion	
People in motion, money in motion	252
Moving when stuck: differentiated and multiple ways to experience mobility in migration	252
Individualism, money and social change	257
Appendix A	
The 'house edge	261
Appendix B	
Player Rewards welcome letter	263
Appendix C	
Casinos leaflets in Chinese	264
The Golden Nugget promotional events, October – December 2007	264
The Empire promotional events, June – August 2007	265
Appendix D	
Gaming machines categories	269
Appendix E	
Punto Banco tables of play	270
Bibliography	271

Illustrations

Maps

Map 1: Distribution of London casinos	31
Map 2: Percentage of the Chinese population in London Boroughs	35
Map 3: Chinatown in the East End, 1896	69
Map 4: Map of China and its regions	77

Tables

Table 1: Chinese in London, 1881–1931	71
Table 2: The China-born population of England and Wales, 1851-1931	71
Table 3: The Chinese population of Great Britain, 1951-1981	73
Table 4: The Chinese population of the UK in 1991 and 2001	76
Table 5: London Clubs International Casinos in the UK	167
Table 6: Casino ownership by operator as at 31 March 2009	168

Pictures

When the source is not specified, pictures were taken by me (except for pictures 10, 11 and 12 which were taken by Ian Burke).

Picture 1: Portrait of Shen Fu Tsong	68
Picture 2: 包子 <i>Bao zi</i> street stall in London's Chinatown	82
Picture 3: Hand-made noodles	83
Picture 4: Bao Zi Inn Inside	83
Picture 5: Leong's, Taiwanese restaurant in Chinatown	84
Picture 6: Roulette table layout	104
Picture 7: The different types of bets at roulette and their odds	105
Picture 8: Ahmei is placing bets at an electronic roulette machine	106
Picture 9: Ahmei is waiting for the result to come up	107
Picture 10: The Golden Nugget Casino	159

Picture 11: The Empire and Napoleons casinos	159
Picture 12: G Casino	160
Picture 13: Morning Voucher promotion at the Empire	171
Picture 14: The Celestial Punto Banco opening, 15 th August 2007	175
Picture 15: The Celestial Punto Banco table	176
Picture 16: Punto Banco table layout	176
Picture 17: Phoenix and dragon symbols	177
Picture 18: An elderly Chinese casino customer	184
Picture 19: Neighbour bets	190
Picture 20: Punto Banco empty grid	211
Picture 21: Punto Banco filled grid (1)	212
Picture 22: Punto Banco filled grid (2)	212
Picture 23: Punto Banco filled grid (3)	213
Picture 24: Punto Banco filled grid (4)	213

‘[M]an is a gambling animal’

Carol Churchil, *Serious Money*, 1984: 13

Introduction

Unmaking the ‘Chinese gambler’¹

For the last four years, I have been dreading the question ‘So, what do you do?’ When asked, I had no choice but to politely inform my questioner that I was a PhD student in Social Anthropology. If we both survived the awkward question of ‘what is anthropology?’ the conversation would naturally follow onto the research topic. Then, inevitably, my answer would pop out like a bullet: ‘Chinese gamblers in London’. My interlocutor’s reaction was always a delight to watch and never failed to produce insightful truths beyond the academic spyglass. Some, usually those who showed interest, would immediately interpret ‘Chinese gamblers’ as incorrigible players, or, perhaps, if they were from the field of gambling research, ‘problem gamblers’. They would share an experience, a story, an opinion, or a further interrogation: ‘When I go to the betting shop, I always see Chinese’, ‘My friend told me about those Chinese gamblers who go to the casino up in Scotland...’, ‘Oh yes they like to gamble, the Chinese, don’t they?’, ‘Are Chinese more addicted to gambling then?’ For others, the topic could not be more alien and meaningless: how could one devote four years of their life to such a topic? A girl once openly spoke for their bored silence: ‘I didn’t know there was any such thing as a Chinese gambler (to study)!’ Now, thanks to me, she did. And by encountering me, many more were finally aware of this or had their image of the Chinese gambler confirmed, strengthened. It was a reality: someone was doing a whole PhD about it! It felt that the very fact I was studying Chinese gamblers in London was creating and reinforcing the stereotype that Chinese people had a ‘natural’ propensity to gamble. It is as if my research was only here to confirm a well-known fact, illuminate what makes Chinese people such big gamblers and eventually find a solution to fix them.²

¹ During the rest of the thesis I will not use inverted commas each time around Chinese gambler. However, as I will show further in this introduction I do mean to imply that it is not a meaningful category.

² My PhD was specifically funded to look into Chinese gamblers in London within the context of gambling deregulation. This meant that contrary to many PhD students in Social Anthropology, the issue was not my original idea and was given to me ahead of time. However, I had entire liberty as how best to conduct the research. As a result, the direction that I have taken in this thesis is the fruit of my methodological and theoretical choices and it is this direction that I articulate in this introduction.

In the early stages, I struggled with this pitfall. Even though I tried to explain that things were more complicated, I could not deny what I was observing in the field: gambling was widely practiced among Chinese people in London. How could I talk about this reality without being complicit in perpetuating the idea that the Chinese gambler is a cultural permanence, inevitably prone to problem gambling? This was a real challenge. And it was heightened by the academic production, largely focusing on questions of addiction and cultural predispositions, and the political context of my research, a blossoming gambling industry in the UK operating under new regulations.

Against the burdens of those assumptions this thesis is driven, from the outset, by a desire to understand Chinese casino players in all their diversity, from the perspective of what they experience during the time they spend gambling in the casino and within the wider context of their lives in London. In that respect, this thesis reopens basic questions that have been closed prematurely by the current discussion of gambling as an addiction or pathology. In a complementary approach, it uses gambling as a lens through which to understand the behaviour of Chinese casino players in London, and more generally the social dynamics at work among the Chinese population in London. In order to understand the distinctiveness of this approach, it is important to first appreciate the existing academic legacy which frames studies of Chinese gamblers.

Chinese gamblers and the politics of problem gambling

The Chinese gambler is a fairly recent focus of interest which is flourishing in the young, yet prolific, field of gambling studies (Arthur et al. 2008, Blaszczynski, Huynh, Dumlao & Farrell 1998, Hong & Chiu 1988, Lai 2006, Lau & Raynard 2005, Lee, Solowoniuk & Fong 2007, Loo, Raylu & Oei 2008, Oei, Lin & Raylu 2007a, 2007b, 2008, Oei & Raylu 2007, 2010, Ozorio & Fong 2004, Papineau 2001, 2005, 2007, Sin 1997, Tang, Wu & Tang 2007, Tang, Wu, Tang & Yan 2010, Wong & Tse 2003, Zheng, Walker & Blaszczynski 2009). It is born out of growing concerns that ‘a whole exhortatory literature [is] scolding us to notice and include culture in gambling research, yet seldom doing so beyond mentioning it’ (Lange 2005: 1, Raylu & Oei 2004). The idea behind this urge is that ‘certain cultural groups are more vulnerable to begin gambling and to develop problem gambling’ (Raylu & Oei 2004: 1087). Chinese people

are feared to be a particularly ‘at risk’ group³ since present studies show that gambling is widespread among Chinese communities, that they score high in prevalence surveys for problem gambling while screening instruments and treatments remain inadequate to their needs (Loo, Raylu & Oei 2008).⁴ Implicitly, an idea prevails: Chinese people have genetic and/or cultural predispositions to gamble.

I could easily have followed this path and started off like Papineau from the premise that ‘Chinese people have always been identified as gamblers⁵ and acknowledged it overtly’ (2007: 1, my translation). After all, my interlocutors often referred to gambling as a culturally and genetically inherited practice, something you cannot help but do because it is in your blood and genes, to the point where a Chinese person who would not gamble could be viewed with suspicion, and perhaps not authentically ‘Chinese’. Dan, who was born and raised in the UK comments:

‘I have always known about gambling since I was very young, mainly because my mother was very much against gambling, but my father really liked to gamble a lot. And, my view is that when you speak about Chinese people, it’s accepted that you gamble. Everyone has to know how to play mahjong. Everyone has to play cards. You know, in fact, if you go out, when we go out as a group of friends, meeting up people, new people, if you ask them what they do, if they answer they don’t know how to play, they don’t know how to gamble, we think it’s weird. You must know how to gamble!’

Mr Yu’s, a Chinese Malaysian man in his 50s who traveled all over South East Asia, ironic remark that Chinese people must have created gambling is harder to resist.

‘I find that where there are Chinese people, there is gambling. After all, we could say that gambling is our patent! [laugh]’

This thesis argues that such comments are incomplete without taking into account the historically and socially distinctive gambling environment of London, the history of Chinese migration to the UK and the life histories and present circumstances of Chinese individuals living in London. Unfortunately, little notice is made of contributions,

3 Some examples of other groups identified to be ‘at risk’ are: American Indians, Aboriginal populations in Canada, Maoris in New Zealand, Hispanics in Texas, and Vietnamese, Greek and Arabic speaking minorities in Australia (see Raylu & Oei 2004 for more details).

4 Similar arguments are also made about the Vietnamese community (Tran 1999) and other Asian communities abroad (Tse, Wong & Kim 2004).

5 Gambler is translated from the French ‘joueur’ which means both gambler and player.

however modest they are, which speak of the Chinese gambler in more context-specific and heterogeneous terms. Direct and indirect accounts of Chinese gamblers' migration journeys to Canada (Lee, Solowoniuk & Fong 2007) and to New Zealand (Wong & Tse 2003) which provide a nice contrast to an ossified category of 'Chinese gambler' remain marginal in the field of gambling studies. With Cassidy (2010), I take the view that such data is not only necessary to better understand how the experience of gambling varies across space, time and between individuals, it is also essential to keep a critical attitude towards the danger of generalising concepts.

'Paying closer attention to what ordinary punters tell us about gambling is one of the ways to ensure that particular discourses, about 'problem gambling', 'responsible gambling' and 'disordered gambling', for example, can be placed within a critical framework, rather than merely absorbed as the apparently neutral tools of our trade.' (2010: 146)

The political context in which the academic interest in gambling as an addiction has flourished needs to be more widely acknowledged. Too often the question of problem gambling is presented as a neutral framework of analysis while in fact the medicalisation of gambling is a fairly recent phenomenon, which has been socially, historically and politically constructed (Collins 1996, Rosecrance 1985, Slade & Mc Conville 2003). It is only in the 1980s that the 'pathological gambler' makes its appearance as a fully recognized mental disorder (Collins 1996, Rosecrance 1985). Subsequently, gambling has shifted from being a moral concern to a medical problem. Of course, the label of 'problem gambling' is another way to moralise gambling. 'The problem with problem gambling' (Slade & Mc Conville 2003) and its focus on addiction is that it gives the impression to be politically neutral. As early as 1985, Rosecrance was questioning the value of available treatments for problem gamblers arguing that they were more based on political dominance than on scientific achievement. To this day, the political dimension of gambling liberalisation is little considered in comparison to the abundant amount of articles about 'problem gambling'. The insight of such research focus is nevertheless needed to articulate how the institutionalisation of gambling as a cultural and legitimate phenomenon is linked to the need of the state to develop new sources of revenues as well as to exert control over its economic subjects (Cosgrave 2001). This framework is particularly useful to make

sense of the new face of gambling in the UK, still taking shape as we speak, as the result of a political will to increase state revenue.⁶

In 2005, the UK broke with its tradition of ‘unstimulated demand’ (Miers 2002, 2004) for gambling and voted in the Gambling Act 2005. From the preliminary discussions⁷ and more intensively from the effect date on 1st September 2007, a process of liberalisation has been redefining the gambling environment in the UK.⁸ Market driven, the reform has scrapped the demand criterion, that is to say that supply should be limited to accommodate existing markets for gambling, without stimulating demand, thus preventing an illegal gambling industry from developing (Miers 2004: 340-341, Cassidy 2010: 143). Instead, operators are now free to compete with one another and to expand, the idea being that the consumer will benefit from such competition by paying lower prices (Miers 2004). Before the legislation came into effect, Miers commented:

‘[C]ompetition between operators would help the player by holding down costs and profit margins’ (2004: 481)

Liberalisation has provided greater freedom for the gambling industry by lifting numerous restrictions including, for example, membership of casinos, licensing of betting shops, bans on advertising and limits on opening hours. The British public is slowly catching up. One of my friends expressed his dismay at counting betting shops on the way to his grandmother’s in Southgate from East London. He just could not keep up. It is also hard not to notice the TV advertising of gambling companies on our small screens.⁹ Beyond the change of our everyday landscape,¹⁰ the new regulatory system is

6 Apart from spread betting which is tax-free, all other gambling activities are levied by the government. Depending on the type of gambling and the scale of the business, taxation usually averages between 15% and 50% with the casino industry being the most heavily taxed type of gambling venue.

7 Deregulation started in 2001 with the publication of the *Gambling Review Report* by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

8 These changes are described and discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5 in relation to the casino gambling industry.

9 Advertising is one of the measures which has been allowed as a result of deregulation in order to enhance business opportunities for the gambling sector. Preceding and following the time it came into effect, gambling advertising was widely discussed in the press. See for example: Hickley, Matthew. 2006. ‘Fear over changes in gambling advertising laws’, *Daily Mail*, 18th July; Slack, James. 2007. ‘Fears over gambling epidemic as casinos given green light to advertise on TV’, *Daily Mail*, 12th March; Grande Carlos & Blitz Roger. 2007. ‘Gambling ads attract new rules’, *Financial Times*, 13th March; Gibson, Owen. Sweney, Mark. 2007. ‘Casinos face 9pm TV advert watershed’, *Guardian*, 8th August; ‘Ladbrokes punts on first TV ad’, *Guardian*, 2nd October 2007.

10 Cassidy observes while carrying out fieldwork in London’s betting shops during the beginnings of deregulation that some betting shops are being refurbished or relocated as a means to make them more attractive (2010: 143).

deeply affecting the way people gamble in Britain. Changes in technology, including online, combine with new regulation to create new markets.¹¹

By making gambling more widely and easily available in the name of deregulation the government is also exposing gamblers and potential gamblers to greater risks of inappropriate consumption, conceived of in this case as ‘addiction’. The new legislation, therefore, also caters for ‘protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling’.¹² In accordance with this regulatory framework, research into ‘problem gambling’, identified as an externality produced by liberalisation, has been encouraged. This mirrors the way the Netherlands state has also used scientific research to justify liberalisation of the gambling market.

‘In this new social condition of the risk society, gambling organisations have come to depend on the scientific analyses of the external effects of their games. Gambling practices have to be accounted for constantly in terms of possible consequences. This is how government and gambling enterprises legitimate their proposals for expansion (or curtailment) of the market’ (Kingma 2004: 64)

Funding for this thesis has been granted within this context,¹³ and to some extent, with the expectations that its findings will bring solutions, or at least answers about how to cater for the Chinese part of the population believed to be more disproportionately affected by the Gambling Act 2005. Similar prospects were formulated by some of my contributors. One of them thought that there was no point doing this research if it was not going to help directly problem gamblers while another hoped that I would be able to find a drug that would help him to stop gambling. It seemed natural and legitimate for them that my research would fit within the schema of those existing discourses. The ambition of this thesis, however, is more modest and more cautious.

‘Problem gambling’ cloaks complex social dynamics which contradict the idea that responsibility for pathologised behaviour lies solely with the individual. The question, ‘What is wrong with Chinese gamblers?’ leaves little room for understanding more

11 Leith, William. 2010. ‘How gambling moved into the mainstream’, *Financial Times*, 28 May.

12 Gambling Act 2005, Section 1(c).

13 Funding for this thesis was jointly granted from the Economic and Social Research Council and the former Responsibility in Gambling Trust (now Responsible Gambling Fund) as part of a bigger project. This project comprised two others researches: one by Rebecca Cassidy in London Betting shops and one by Liu Zhihong about mahjong and casino gambling among Chinese people in Manchester. At the same time as this project, six other projects in different fields also received funding.

complex issues. My intention with this thesis is to reopen questions that have been prematurely closed, including: ‘Who are Chinese gamblers in London’s casinos?’ And ‘what counts as gambling for this migrant population?’

Through the lens of gambling

As I have just demonstrated, problem gambling was an impasse that I was perpetually directed into. Not only did it become evident that I should take some distance from this concept but also that I should not take for granted what was, or was not, ‘gambling’. One way to avoid this problem was to give prominence to how Chinese casino players experienced the activity of gambling, from their perspective. This, as will become clear in the thesis, provided some interesting insights but it was not enough. As I describe in Chapter 1, my contributors generally tended to distance themselves from the denomination of ‘gamblers’ or ‘gambling’. For this purpose, their discourses only became meaningful when confronted with what they did when they staked money in a casino game. That is the approach I take in Chapter 3 where I explore how the gamblers I met experience time through the movement of their bodily actions and how they find it hard to stop the momentum of this rhythm when they are winning. For Chinese casino players ‘you can lose but cannot win’ since you are obliged to stop when you are losing while you want to keep playing when you are winning. This ethnographic description shows that there is more to winning than an end to reach. This is particularly noticeable that gamblers engage with casino games while knowing chances of winning are unfavourable to them. Besides this methodological approach of reconstructing what gambling is from my contributors’ experiences of time and space, I also understand gambling to be the product of a specific context. With a focus on London’s casinos, I give an historical account of how casinos occupy the urban landscape of London and how the shape of this specific gambling activity is forged through legislative changes, and more recently through the process of deregulation.

Although my focus is on casino gambling, I am also mindful of the existence of many more informal forms of gambling among Chinese people in the UK. Mahjong is an obvious example which is still practiced throughout the community. Regularly played in

the premises of Chinese community centres,¹⁴ mahjong is also played at home between family members and/or friends, at Chinese businessmen clubs and also within the premises of some casinos (Liu pers. Comm.).¹⁵ Playing poker is also quite popular among younger Chinese people. They play it at a friend's house, in poker rooms, online or during informal tournaments. These forms of gambling were touched in passing during interviews but they were not used as foundations for the research. There were two reasons for this. Firstly, practical aspects to access these more intimate spheres of sociality made it difficult for me to explore their role in more extent. Secondly, focusing on the casino industry was in my view a more productive and interesting way to contribute to existing anthropological research on gambling and Chinese overseas.

When anthropologists first studied gambling, the existence of gambling practices and the games played were observed as part of fieldwork (Altman 1985, Geertz 1973, Goodale 1987, Hayano 1989, Maclean 1984, Mitchell 1988, Riches 1979, Sexton 1987, Woodburn 1982, Zimmer 1986). Typically, gambling was 'discovered' among a group of people that the anthropologist was studying. To some extent, this trend set a precedent and gambling in anthropology has been cast as a side topic, used to illustrate a more general point about the exchange system and the sociability of the group studied (for example Papataxiarchis 1999, Stewart 1994, Tremon 2005).¹⁶ Apart from Hayano's (1982) study of poker rooms in California, little attention has been given within anthropology to gambling industries and the social relationships they create. This is slowly changing. Examples of this new approach include Mann's (2003) study of Bingo halls into one of Britain's seaside resorts, Schüll's (2005, 2006) work in Las Vegas about machine gambling, Cattellino's (2008) study of casino operations run by Seminole tribes in Florida and Cassidy's (2010, forthcoming) work on London's betting shops. Following in these steps, this study uses casino gambling as a lens through which to understand Chinese people in motion and particularly their migration to the UK. This shift of perspective has implications for the way this research has been carried out and for the kind of analysis it produces. A focus on the casino allows me to revisit recurrent stereotypes about Chinese people in a new light and to look instead at the more

14 In the Hackney Chinese Community Centre which I visited regularly, elderly clients would often play mahjong and a Hakka card-playing game.

15 My colleague Liu Zhihong has carried out a research among Chinese gamblers in Manchester. She focuses more specifically on Mahjong which is made available in some casinos to attract Chinese customers to their premises.

16 The sole exception is Malaby's (2003) study of gambling in a Cretian city.

interesting question of how they experience this time of rapid transition in China and through the process of migration. In turn, this approach opens the door to reconsider the relationship between time, money and personhood.

First, I wish to challenge the image of cultural exclusivity which supposedly characterises the Chinese people. Many people who first heard about my research thought I was frequenting illicit Chinese casinos in Chinatown and socialising with Chinese gangsters. My grandmother's first reaction to the topic of my research was horror and outcry. She begged me not to do it because she imagined I would be spending time in dangerous places. Behind these assumptions is the idea that Chinese are gambling on their terms, within their own exclusive world. I was interested on the contrary in the way Chinese people were part of, interacted with the British gambling environment, and how this context of a gambling industry blossomed through the impulse of deregulation impacted on Chinese people and vice versa. Observing this encounter was particularly important since Chinese migrants would have experienced a different gambling environment (if not several)¹⁷ before coming to the UK. A snapshot of this diversity of practices and legal contexts is given by some anthropologists of China and Chinese populations elsewhere who have described gambling practices among the Chinese populations of Calcutta in India (Oxfeld 1993), South Africa (Krige 2004), Macao (Pina-Cabral 2002b), the city of Taipei in Taiwan (Festa 2007) and the Zhongba village in Western Hubei (Steinmüller 2009). These studies reveal that gambling takes different shapes through a variety of games or versions of the same game, articulated through changing legal and moral frameworks and different types of sociality and social dynamics. The detailed and rich data of those ethnographies demonstrate that the Chinese gambler is wrongly believed to be homogeneous, static in time, oblivious of social relationships and politically neutral. But also, this implies that through migration individuals confront a new gambling environment where gambling is far more easily available, where new or similar games are played on different terms and where certain kinds of social interactions are engendered. By examining the encounter of Chinese migrants with the British gambling environment, I am as such looking at experiences of social change and how they take shape through the practice of gambling.

¹⁷ I am thinking here of those migrants who have migrated through one or more countries before coming to the UK. One of my interlocutors Ying had, for example, lived in Germany before and would describe how different going to a casino in Germany was from going to a casino in the UK.

Chinese people are a particularly suitable case study for a focus on casino gambling. Beyond the stereotype of the Chinese gambler that I explore as above, Chinese people, especially those living overseas, have always been portrayed to be talented at making money, and as such to have an affinity with capitalism. With the growing economic development of China, this image is becoming more strongly affirmed. The Chinese are now acclaimed to be more progressive and in tune with modernity. The image is being reinforced by social and economic changes in China. Instead of opposing them, both stereotypes of the Chinese gambler and the Chinese entrepreneurs are in the thesis reconsidered on the same ground and are deconstructed from the more productive angle of Chinese migrants' relationship with time, money and risk. Migration is imagined as a particular kind of speculation on the future in the hope that it will shape the present in a meaningful way (see Chapter 4). This approach focuses on people in movement, how they re-shape their selves through different temporalities and via the circulation of money exchange. It brings a new perspective which overcomes a tendency to understand Chinese migrants by their 'static' characteristics.

Chinese expatriate communities have typically been depicted as an 'other' with exclusive cultural beliefs and traditions that only other Chinese would be able to share and understand. Although this tendency to portray cultural exclusivity and homogeneity has been denounced and addressed in many respects, I demonstrate in Chapter 2 that more importance needs to be given to the role of the individual in negotiating self-identification to the 'Chinese group'. In the thesis, I re-examine stereotypes of Chineseness from a new angle, that of gambling. I demonstrate that the fact that Chinese have been described to be gamblers, good entrepreneurs or to belong to the same culture is not given but is symptomatic of the migration experience. This is also how I explain their relationship with the casino, as a gradual and historical encounter with a growing casino industry in the UK. Chinese migrants are more likely to reach the casino because of the experience of migrating and because of the particular circumstances they experience during their life in the UK. This question of how a focus on gambling can help to illuminate understanding of the Chinese population in the UK context is also pushed further in Chapter 6 with a detailed discussion on the notion of luck. Often attributed to have some intrinsic Chinese characteristics, luck, when taken in the context of casino gambling, more pertinently reveals the morality of wealth acquisition in the context of a capitalist economy and how the means by which wealth is

acquired constitutes particular kinds of individuals. This research reveals that behind ‘Chineseness’ there is a seething movement of social connections and disconnections, symptomatic of the migratory context.

By pointing out the social dynamism of Chinese people in the UK, this research also wants to demonstrate, as Oxfeld (1993) and Steinmüller (2009) have highlighted, that gambling practices are part of a wider economic context.¹⁸ Oxfeld draws attention to the contradictory, yet not trifling, juxtaposition of entrepreneurship and gambling among Chinese businessmen in Calcutta. Both activities give the opportunity to play with fate ‘as a showcase for the actor’s capabilities and willingness to take the risks that might bring rewards’ (1993: 117). Such strong similarities require some distance which is enacted by the containment of gambling within ‘both temporal and spatial restrictions’ (1993: 119). In the context of a ‘market economy with Chinese characteristics’,¹⁹ Steinmüller draws our attention to the fact that in contemporary rural China ‘gambling (...) is expanding more and more outside the confines, inside which it was socially acceptable and even expected’, reflecting an ‘ideal of social vitality’ which has moved further out ‘to what belongs to market relationships’ (2009: 228). As he rightly notes, the boundaries of socially accepted gambling are never fixed and constantly challenged in the moral ambiguity of everyday practices.

In the thesis, I explore further and more systematically those equivocal intersections of gambling with other economic activities which imply risking some money without the certainty of rewards, such as informal work, doing business, trading in the stock market or migration. This has two purposes. It allows me to show that the moral and legal distinctions of what ‘counts’ as gambling in Britain are historically constructed, constantly moving and strongly reflective of a political context where gambling has been recently liberalised and highly regularised. But mostly, these grey areas help me to challenge the distinction between rationality and irrationality which categorises gambling as a ‘problem’ activity while other risk-taking activities like entrepreneurship and trading are positively viewed and praised. Taking risks through staking money without the guarantee of returns is a powerful act of identity making. However, when

18 Ozorio & Fong’s psychological study is also to be noted. It unusually compares the risk taking attitude of Chinese people in casino gambling with investment in the stock market.

19 Steinmüller is quoting Harvey (2005).

considered in economic terms, gambling is often presented as an irrational mystery that researchers strive to 'explain'. 'Why do people gamble and keep gambling despite heavy losses?' (Rachlin 1990) is the question on the lips of many conventional gambling researchers. My deep dissatisfaction with this question is its desire for closure. It presupposes why gamblers chase money against a restricted conception of time, economic rationality and success. I open it up by shifting the attention from the constant search for an explanation to gamblers' so-called irrational behaviour onto what actually happens during gambling, and thus to more productive questions about the relationships between time, money and personhood, the central themes of this study.

Money and its circulation is a central characteristic of gambling which distinguishes it from gaming. While gambling and gaming share some similarities, such as creating secluded temporalities from that of everyday rhythms (Reith 2002), gambling's rationality is attached to the importance of staking and circulating money. In this thesis, I explore how motivations for gambling are misunderstood because money is wrongly assumed to be a monolithic symbol of self-interest and of the destruction of society. This is where the intersection of money with time is crucial. Time, as I demonstrate through the close observation of gamblers' bodily actions when they are gambling is not a uniform and linear entity that everybody shares equally. Time is not just an instrument to make money. As such the relationship between time and money cannot be assumed but must be reconsidered in situ through the way individuals create and experience different temporalities. The model of economic rationality and of maximizing means for an end is too restrictive and does not take into account the different rationalities at work through the circulation of money. The interesting way time and money are articulated in gambling is pushed to an extreme in the casino since the space is designed and controlled to make gamblers forget the notion of time discipline that rules their life rhythms outside. In that respect, the casino is a productive ground to observe these intersections of time and money and how they are meaningful to the construction of personhood.

Through the lens of this broader economic analysis of risk and rewards based on a critical reading of time and money, gambling becomes a useful springboard from which to access and explore migratory projects to the UK and the dream to get rich quickly that may encourage such undertakings. I describe how, in the aftermath of arrival, this quest to benefit from the global movement of 'time-space compression' (Harvey 1989)

in migration is slowed down or stopped, even if only temporarily, by the realities of life in the UK. In these liminal moments, despite how short or definitive they can be, the space of the casino, a contained spatio-temporality, offers the opportunity to experience consequential decisions in a repeated and systematic manner. The detailed observation of bodily actions and money circulation in gambling, I argue, provides a rich avenue to examine how Chinese migrants in London continue to exist and become in the context of a new and challenging environment where they have to deal with risk, uncertainty, an unpromising future and/or a past that cannot be changed.

The chapters

Chapter 1 introduces the methodological and theoretical design of the research and how it has been constructed in line with the socially and historically distinctive gambling environment of Chinese people in London. The aim is to move beyond the paradigm of problem gambling as an individual pathology to consider the contribution of an ethnographic approach. I discuss how I focus on experiences of time and space to illuminate the process of Chinese migration to the UK and Chinese players' engagement with casino gambling. In line with this methodological approach I show how anthropological theories on the themes of social exchange, money, economic rationality and individualism in China are all relevant to articulate the different rationalities at work among Chinese casino players in London.

Chapter 2 moves on to the demographic landscape of this research, the Chinese population of London. The extent of the heterogeneity and fragmentation within this population is revealed through the singularities of individual cases and through historical accounts. The point is to show that the diverse and dynamic characteristics of this population are too often underplayed by discourses of Chineseness and as such need to be better accounted for. What connects or separates different Chinese people is not fixed and changes over time. It is these social transformations which are explored through the lens of casino gambling in London.

Chapter 3 is the backbone of this thesis. It demonstrates on ethnographic terms the theoretical and methodological path initiated in Chapter 1 through an exploration of how time is experienced in gambling. For this purpose I use a phenomenological

description of the actions of a player during the course of a gambling session at an electronic roulette machine. This allows me to reconsider the argument that gamblers are irrational because they do not win at gambling and the idea that time is uniform, equal for all and gradually progressing towards an end. I show instead that gamblers create their own temporality through the unique movement of their bodily actions in the casino and that this ability to be time maker is unequally and differentially experienced outside the casino.

After a close examination of how gamblers create rhythms inside and outside the casino, Chapter 4 explores further Chinese migrants' relationship with time by looking at their presumed obsession with the future. The point of this chapter is to dismiss the idea that there is a contradiction between entrepreneurship and gambling, that one activity is rational and the other irrational. The cases of entrepreneurship and then migration are used to demonstrate that what matters is to take risks since it shapes the self in the present. This allows me to reconsider ideas of success and failure and to observe that individuals re-interpret them through the different events that unfold in their lives.

Chapter 5 focuses on gambling again to look this time at the space of the casino. While introducing the geographical and historical specificities of the casino landscape in London, it also traces where and how the London casino industry meets with the Chinese population of London and how this encounter is not 'natural' but politically and economically determined. I confront, in this chapter, the marketing strategies of the casino with Chinese gamblers' occupancy of the casino space to show that both parties are equally active in shaping the space of the casino. This dynamic process of space making is revealed more clearly through an examination of how the casino is designed as a space cut out from everyday rhythms with the intention to encourage gamblers' spending. It also reveals how this setting provides a fertile ground for gamblers to exercise their own sense of temporality.

The controlled environment created by the spatio-temporality of the casino is contrasted in Chapter 6 with the availability (or lack) of opportunities in life through a focus on the notion of luck. I discuss how the view that luck is an irrational belief is informative of a morality of wealth acquisition in the context of a rapid economic transition. In contrast, narratives of being lucky or unlucky among Chinese migrants in London are shown to

challenge the idea that reward is the result of hard work only. The casino provides a privileged place to experience luck on a regular basis despite various structural inequalities.

The different themes tackled in each chapter are bound together in Chapter 7 through an exploration of the feeling of greed and money circulation while gambling in the casino. In this chapter, I articulate how come some Chinese gamblers talk of being greedy as a positive inner quality of the self to challenge that gambling is about self-interest. This leads me to take a closer look at gamblers' relationships with money and more specifically at the circulation of money in gambling where accumulation and spending are part of the same movement. Money, through its circulation, shapes the individual by linking or disconnecting him/her with others and the social obligations attached to these relationships.

In the Conclusion, I extend the premise set out in this introduction that an observation of casino gambling in the UK can offer an interesting insight into the process of migration as experienced by Chinese individuals in London. I then explain how this contributes to wider questions of individualism, money and time in a situation of intense social change.

Chapter 1

Appreciate the social qualities of gambling

Within the extensive literature on gambling, the past and potential future contributions of anthropology remain somewhat overlooked. Recent literature reviews (Abbott et al. 2005, Johansson et al. 2009, Kalischuk et al. 2006, McGowan 2004, McGowan et al. 2000, Raylu & Oei 2002) show that most gambling research and journals are dominated by psychology, quantitative sociology and the phenomenon of problem gambling. Little attention is given to sociological and anthropological studies which have demonstrated that the function and social significance of gambling vary within and across cultures, between genders, classes, ethnic groups and ages (McConville & Slade 2003, McGowan 2004, McMillen 1996). Instead, mainstream discourses continue to frame gamblers and problem gamblers through pre-existing criteria in a manner that does not reflect this diversity and how gambling is locally perceived. These academic discourses are rooted in the model of individual pathology which overlooks the role of social relationships (Suissa 2006). This model, as I mention in the introduction, is normative. I argue, with Cassidy (2010), Prus (2004) and Rosecrance (1985), that the ethnographic method is useful in counterbalancing dominant paradigms about gambling and to highlight the diversity and mobility of gambling behaviours in the making. But, I do not think, like Howland (2001), that the small size of an ethnography makes it less 'scientifically robust' than a survey to study gambling. More explicitly, this chapter answers the question of what could not have been understood about gambling without an ethnographic approach. It aims to explore what other approaches, such as those in psychology and sociology, miss out. This in turn allows me to propose an original methodological and theoretical approach to the study of gambling.

First, I discuss how and why I spread my fieldwork over a variety of places and social groups where Chinese people gamble and/or socialise. Then, I describe in more detail the challenging nature of my fieldwork and how it required me to make certain methodological choices. Because I was dealing with a diverse and dispersed population and an activity that carries a certain amount of social stigma, accessing data was difficult and cumbersome, and in effect, limited by practical constraints. This meant that

my fieldwork evolved into a wider approach to the study of gambling explored through an examination of relevant themes and theories: gambling as social exchange, the social ambiguity of money, the construction of economic rationality and the Chinese individual in a context of high social mobility.

Where is the field? Juggling between different spaces and temporalities

Contrary to many anthropologists' accounts, I did not arrive in the main site of my fieldwork, I was already there. As such, I cannot add to the countless arrival stories, those typical rites of passage. However, following the steps of Caputo (2000), I suggest that my relationship with the field is no less legitimate and problematised. Having already lived as a French expatriate in London for five years by the time I started fieldwork, London was the surrounding of my everyday life, which I had come to know particularly well through cycling (almost) everywhere. Not originally from London and not British either, my ties with the city are fairly recent. But they are well-rooted enough to consider it 'my home' over and above my sunny hometown in Provence, mainly because I have built over all those years a network of meaningful connections with many other Londoners, British and non-British. Every night after a day in the field I would go back 'home' to the comforting atmosphere of a cosy and known environment in Hackney, where I had lived for four years before starting this PhD. From the onset, fieldwork was not marked by a clear division with my daily world and social life. As a matter of fact, fieldwork tended to strain a rooted settledness in London. For my friends, it made no difference, and social obligations towards them would sometimes conflict with the demands and rhythms of fieldwork. Saying this, the particular worlds of my fieldwork did not share much with the ones I had been involved with during those previous four years. I had never been to a casino or a betting shop in London before starting this research and I had not known many Chinese people in London, although I had regularly met Chinese migrants in my previous job.²⁰ Fieldwork was in many respects clearly different and somehow alien to the life I had had so far in

20 I used to work for Project: London, the domestic project of Médecins du Monde (an international medical NGO) in London. The project (still going on) helps migrants to access mainstream healthcare services. At the time I was working we had quite a large number of Chinese clients.

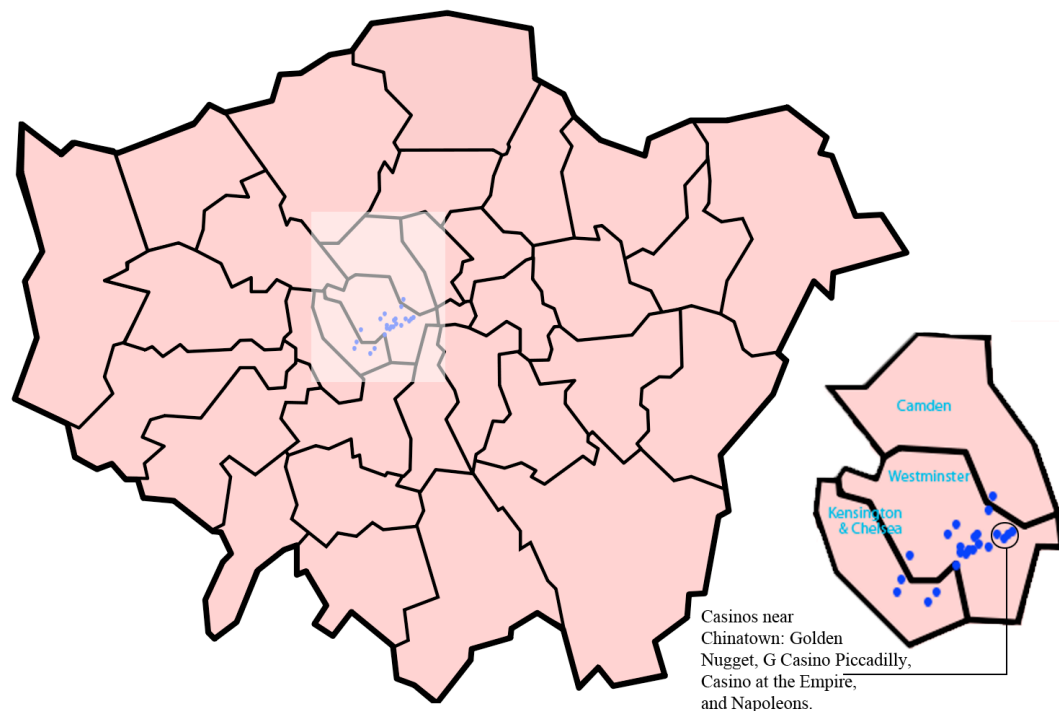
London and to its rhythm. In my case, fieldwork was not so much about discovering a new place but more about differently perceiving a familiar urban environment, London, through two new perspectives: its Chinese population and gambling.

I gradually found out that the city abounded in a diversity of relevant places for my study, some obvious, others less so. Certain places, which comprised both gambling and Chinese elements, became targeted locations where I should concentrate my attention. Gambling venues in and around Chinatown, such as betting shops, arcades and casinos, were early on explored as potential foci. The high proportion of casinos in this part of town (see map 1 below) made it a particularly interesting ground to explore the connection between Chinese and gambling. It was clear after a few visits to the six casinos²¹ in the vicinity that Chinese customers represented a high proportion of their clientele. The Golden Nugget²² situated in the Trocadero building by Piccadilly Circus was the first casino I visited. To get used to the novelty of this environment I started my fieldwork regularly frequenting this casino. Then I followed the movement of Chinese gamblers to the other five casinos in the area. As the trend favoured the Empire and Napoleons, these became, with the Golden Nugget, the three main sites I visited several times during the week at different times of the day and night. My observation of the space of the casino was strongly guided by an objective to understand the rhythms that were taking place inside and how they differed from rhythms outside. From time to time, I made additional observations in some of the betting shops in Chinatown and other London casinos, occasionally following some of my contacts and at other times getting a sense of specific atmospheres in other gambling venues. These complementary visits were useful to situate the main sites of my research within the larger gambling scenery of London. Observations were complemented by interviewing Chinese visitors and/or gamblers to those three casinos, alongside interviews with casino staff and collection of relevant articles from UK newspapers and gambling industry magazines.²³

21 One of the six casinos I visited at the time I was doing fieldwork has since closed.

22 I have not used pseudonyms for casino names as the nature of my research makes it impossible to do so. I have made sure, however, to respect the privacy of all my contributors and I have used pseudonyms for the name of persons I mention in this thesis.

23 I mainly used articles from magazines focusing on the international and national casino industry, such as *International Casino Review*, *Casino Life*, *Intergaming* and *Casino International*.



Map 1: Distribution of the 23 London casinos in the three boroughs of Westminster, Kensington & Chelsea and Camden.²⁴

Another important factor in my choice of the casino as a type of gambling venue was that it felt the least uncomfortable gambling setting. As a young, white, and unaccompanied female newcomer to the scene, I first stepped into those places with unease and awkwardness. I was clearly out of place: there was no one else like me. The three betting shops in Chinatown were full of men, most of them Chinese looking; women were rare and young white ones nonexistent as far as I could see. The casinos, in comparison, more frequently received female customers on their premises. These remained, nevertheless, an evident minority. Despite the higher proportion of women (in comparison to the betting shop), I still did not quite match the profile of the female casino player. Whenever they came, mainly on weekend nights, younger white women were never on their own and tended to be with boyfriends, husbands or groups of friends. Women on their own tended to be much older and/or of ethnic origin, a large

²⁴ When I first started fieldwork there were 26 casinos in London. There are now 23. Three closed down: the Gala casino on Piccadilly, Fifty and the Hilton Hotel Paddington casino. This number is likely to change as the Hippodrome is set to open early 2011 and Newham Council has a license for a new casino. Playboy is also considering reopening a casino in London ('Playboy makes London casino a priority', *International Casino Review*, February 2009). Moreover, casinos that have closed down could be bought back and could reopen under a new owner. More casinos are also likely to close down. There are notably rumours that the Sportsman might be sold off as the building lease is about to expire. 'LCI to sell casino at 50 St James', *The Independent*, 17 November 2009.

proportion of them were ‘Chinese looking’.²⁵ Added to that, I spoke Mandarin, spent lots of time with Chinese clients, and would hardly gamble. My presence in the casino was marginal but slowly found its place among the many other onlookers who, like me, were just killing time, not gambling much, if at all. My time spent in the casino and my regular attendance slowly helped to make me part of it, somehow. In that respect, I was no different from all other gamblers and/or visitors whose relationships with the space of the casino were built on the basis of the duration of their stay and the regularity of their visits.

From the beginning, I strongly felt that regularly visiting gambling venues was not enough and should be complemented as much as possible by socialising with the Chinese population of London. Those who gambled and those who did not. I hoped this would help me to find other gamblers and approach them in a context different from that of the casino. My aim was also to get a sense of the diversity of Chinese people living in London, how they did or did not connect with each other, to find out what else they did besides gambling, and ultimately to understand the wider social context of my research. Later on in the field, I also became interested in the ways Chinese individuals would risk their money in other social contexts, e.g. in business or the stock market and how these compared to gambling in the casino. Recognisable Chinese places, such as Chinese community centres and Chinatown²⁶ in Soho²⁷ were first targeted. Chinese community centres,²⁸ religious centres,²⁹ and other relevant Chinese organisations³⁰

25 Of course, ‘Chinese looking’ does not necessarily mean of Chinese nationality and/or origin. My linguistic observations tended to confirm that many ‘Chinese looking’ customers spoke Mandarin or some other Chinese dialects, such as Cantonese and Fujianese. We will also see later in Chapter 5 that the casinos are aware that the majority of customers are Chinese and especially market for them.

26 As rightly reminded by Benton & Gomez (2008), Chinatown is a term coined in the context of the United States, which as such does not fully translate the historical and geographical circumstances of the Chinese presence in London. In London, Chinatown was first born out of the arrival of Chinese seafarers in the East Docklands. The Chineseness of Chinatown was, however, exaggerated. It was not actually just populated by Chinese, but also equally by other migrant populations and English families (Seed 2006: 68). It was the visibility of Chinese signs, not the relatively small numbers of Chinese and Chinese businesses (167 according to the 1931 Census) which made the Chinese presence memorable for every visitor to the area (Seed 2006: 68). Later in the 50s, Chinatown moved from Limehouse to Soho.

27 Not as well known as Chinatown in Soho, two big Chinese commercial centres, what Luk call ‘quasi-Chinatowns’ or ‘Chinatowns hinterlands’ (2009: 596), far out from the city centre, serve similar functions without the political and cultural symbol of Chinatown in Soho: Oriental City in Colindale, which was closed at the end of my fieldwork on 1st June 2008 for redevelopment, and Wing Yip Business Centre in Croydon.

28 In the boroughs of Barnet, Brent, Camden, Greenwich, Hackney, Haringey, Islington, Lambeth, Lewisham, Newham, Southwark, Tower Hamlets and Westminster.

were contacted by mail and phone and, when possible, visited. The endeavour took time and was not always fruitful, but in many instances there were no other ways to get in touch. As I got to know people some referred me to other contacts and it got a little easier. However, after a meeting or a visit, it was difficult to find opportunities to develop a long-term connection and, at best, I obtained a second meeting. That is why, in order to go beyond the limited scope of formal meetings and give a sense of rootedness and routine, I also engaged socially in a more defined role than that of researcher. I volunteered once a week at the elderly luncheon club of my local Chinese community centre in Hackney (literally just across the road from my house) and joined their Chinese singing group on Wednesday nights, which got me invited to all sorts of Chinese events (e.g. fundraising dinner, karaoke night, singing competition for Chinese TV, Chinese New Year celebration, Chinese women's day at the centre, singing representation at a local festival, fundraising event for earthquake in Sichuan, etc). My intention to make contact with different types of social networks besides the long-established ones also led me to attend some of the Chinese young professional networks organised by Dimsum. This is an English website for the Chinese community in the UK for whom I volunteered towards the end of my fieldwork. These networking events highlighted both the growing importance of Chinese young professionals in London and the recent creation of two associations, Association of Chinese Financial Professionals in the UK, the ACfPU,³¹ and 丝路 *Silu*,³² as well as the need to integrate those social networks in my research. Going to these different places and events allowed me to encounter a diversity of Chinese individuals, gamblers and non-gamblers, which led in some cases to formal interviews.

My fieldwork among Chinese people in London contrasts deeply with my experience of fieldwork in Cholon, the Chinese area of Ho Chi Minh City in South Vietnam

29 Chinese Church in London, London Chinese Lutheran Church, London Chinese Baptist Church, Fo Guang Shan Temple, Bishop Ho Ming Wah Association and I-Kuan Tao London representative.

30 Chinese National Living Centre (CNLC), Chinese Information and Advice Centre (CIAC), Chinese Mental Health Association (CMHA), Christian Centre for Gambling Rehabilitation, London Chinatown Chinese Association, Chinese in Britain Forum, Ming-Ai Institute, Pearl Foundation.

31 See their website www.acfpu.org.uk.

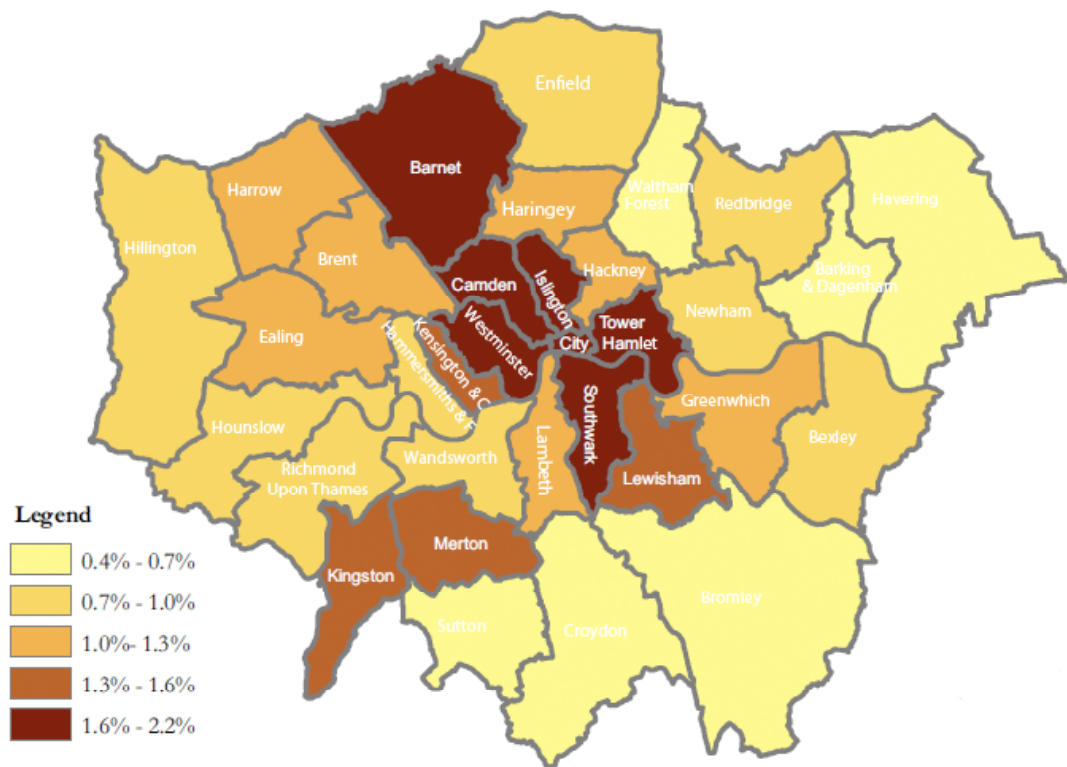
32 丝路 *Silu* means 'silk road' in Chinese.

(Loussouarn 2001). During that time,³³ I lived with a Chinese family who ran a hairdressing saloon in the area. I regularly visited another family and I interacted daily with Chinese residents and a few Vietnamese families. I was invited to many weddings and other types of social gatherings. Every day, every minute was fieldwork. I did not have to make much effort to access information but I could not escape it either. In contrast, in London, doing fieldwork felt more like being a reporter, chasing up people for months on end for an informal interview squeezed into a busy schedule. Time was a rare commodity that could not be shared easily with a researcher. Many of my interlocutors were professionals who had, understandingly, no time to ‘hang out’ and more pressing things to do than talking to me.³⁴ In addition to this, the Chinese population in London is very spread out and scattered (Luk 2009, see map 2 below).³⁵ Many live in one borough and work in another. I was surprised to find out, for example, that in the Hackney Chinese Community Services, many of the elderly did not live in Hackney but in other boroughs, some quite far out, and would come a long way for lunch there. So, for every meeting I organised (or tried to), the imperatives of time and distance were strongly felt. I did not come across any of those constraints in Ho Chi Minh City, where fieldwork was taking place in a different rhythm: time felt slower, urban space smaller – more like the scale of a village – and people had plenty of time to spare. Unlike Candea (2007) who used the natural geographical borders of a Corsican village as an ‘arbitrary location’ to reconstruct, the point of departure of my fieldwork in London was not as easily localised in space and was far more spread out. Fieldwork quickly required me to be mobile and to adapt to eclectic social contexts and unexpected outcomes. For this reason, the encounter of Chinese and gambling in my fieldwork more evidently comes across as a construction. After all, as Candea reminds, every fieldwork is a ‘cut through meaning’ (2007: 180), hidden or not by existing delimitations, acknowledged or not by the researcher. But, beyond my efforts to find the field, my steps were constantly re-guided by interactions with individuals, the material environment and serendipity.

33 I carried out fieldwork in Vietnam during August and September 2000 and during January and February 2001 for my MA thesis at the University of Aix-Marseille in France.

34 I do not wish here to complain or to condemn anybody. My intention is more to highlight the importance of time availability when carrying out fieldwork.

35 Unlike in the United States, the dispersion of the Chinese population in London is not a new phenomenon (Benton & Gomez 2008, Ng 1968, Seed 2006). The presence of Chinese people all over London is clearly shown in the 2001 census (see map 2 below).



Map 2: Percentage of the Chinese population in London Boroughs.
(Source: Census 2001)

Fieldwork in London lasted for 15 months from June 2007 to September 2008. Its location was technically multi-sited: revisiting old places of Chineseness, such as Chinatown and community centres and exploring new ones, such as websites and young professional networking events, while visiting casinos and occasionally betting shops in and around the vicinity of London's Chinatown and other London casinos. Rather than being rooted in clearly defined locations, my fieldwork 'floated' across different spaces, gradually extending from its given departure points. This development took place on the basis of two methodological concerns (see Candea 2007 for a recent argument on this): widening out common understanding of Chineseness and gambling in the UK beyond their association with certain places (Gupta and Ferguson 1997b: 4) while carrying out an *achievable* qualitative study within the specific conditions of fieldwork (Passaro 1997: 161). This methodological tension necessitated ongoing negotiation. The juggling between different sites, people, rhythms left me with a constant sense of dissatisfaction as I never seemed to be able to reproduce the intensity and accessibility of the fieldwork I experienced in Vietnam. However, as I show in the next section, the limitations I came

across are linked to the nature of gambling as well as of fieldwork.³⁶ As a result, they were a useful springboard with which to productively open up what gambling is about. In that sense, the simple act of being able to follow individuals and to spend time in the spaces they occupied provided valuable information which could not be captured in a questionnaire or a laboratory experiment.

Making sense of the impalpable nature of gambling

Very soon after I started fieldwork it became evident that gambling as a research topic was problematic. On hearing the word, individuals would often close up and immediately explain that they had nothing interesting to say since they were not (really) gamblers. Chinese community centres and other Chinese organisations would generally dismiss that they could help in any way if they replied at all. Some were demonstrably defensive and others just did not have time to meet with a researcher. All of them heartily agreed that there was a problem of gambling addiction among Chinese people and that it needed to be addressed, but nobody wanted to be associated with such a negative topic. Throughout my diverse interactions with Chinese individuals there was arguably a strong tendency to associate the appellation of the ‘gambler’ with what they understood to be a ‘problem gambler’. Being a gambler was having a problem. This meant that elderly Chinese who played mahjong every day for a few pounds at a community centre were not considered gamblers but that those who were declared ‘problem gamblers’ and were following some form of therapy were.³⁷ Understandably thus, like Favret-Sadaa’s (1977) and Jenkins’ (1994) French peasants, gamblers were reluctant to be negatively portrayed by public opinion.³⁸ In that context, the group most morally opposed to gambling, the 福音戒賭中 *fuyin jiedu zhongxin* Christian Centre for Gambling Rehabilitation (CCGR), was presented as the only relevant interlocutor I

36 Although I thought for a while that the amount of data I collected was restricted, during the writing process I became, on the contrary, overwhelmed by its richness.

37 The Camden Chinese Community Centre which positively responded to my request for a meeting, spontaneously provided me with two elderly interviewees. These two elderly Chinese men had been put forward as interviewees because they were considered ‘problem gamblers’ while the mahjong players who regularly come to the centre were automatically excluded as potential interviewees.

38 Chinese migrants from older waves of migration, and their children, were particularly reluctant to be portrayed negatively since they did not want to see their painstakingly acquired reputation of ‘model minority’ tarnished (see Chapters 2 and 4).

could speak to.³⁹ By asking questions about their relationship to gambling I was, therefore, learning more about how they perceived their relationship with me, the researcher, than about their actual behaviour. As Cassidy (2010) argues in the case of her ethnographic research on London's betting shops, this was precisely why it was worth asking. In this way I was able to obtain discourses about what gamblers and non-gamblers imagined I wanted to hear, that is to say how they imagined they should behave. Their answers were a useful foundation for more in-depth and relevant questioning. The nuanced and different ways in which gamblers described themselves and what they meant by gambling would have escaped me if I had based my research on a presupposed definition of gambling. This is a strong contribution of the ethnographic method compared to other methods which study gambling in the social sciences.

To avoid assuming what a gambler is or is not, I spoke equally to Chinese people who were 'apparently' gamblers and those who 'apparently' were not gamblers. Like Ries in her study of spontaneous conversational discourses in Russia, I 'made a concerted effort to speak with people who would represent a variety of views and experiences' (1997: 5). This also allowed me to compensate for the difficulty in accessing gamblers and to realise that there was no clear distinction between the two. In fact, many individuals had practiced or were practicing gambling, even if it was not on a regular basis and even if they primarily said they did not. Everyone, whether they had little or no relationship with gambling, or whether they spent a fair amount of their time in the casino and/or gambling, had interesting and valuable comments to make about what it meant to be Chinese, a migrant or of Chinese origin, to believe in luck and fate, to work in London, to take risks, about what place money played in their life and much more. The particularity and depth of their stories, along with the wide range of matters discussed, contributed to give me a deep understanding of my research matter beyond the common questions associated with gambling. Immersed observation alongside regular interactions was a great combination. It allowed me to see how people's behaviours changed over time and how what they told me related to what they actually did. This would not have been possible without building trust which had the effect of making relationships with my interlocutors more intimate and relaxed as they got to know me better. However, with gamblers, trust was not easily obtained.

39 The Christian Centre for Gambling Rehabilitation (CCGR) is a Chinese Christian charity established in 1996 which provides support to Chinese gamblers who want to stop gambling (see their website at www.ccgr.org.uk/en_intro.html).

In the casino, it did not prove much easier to speak to gamblers. In some respects it was even harder, since virtually all gamblers, with some rare exceptions, do not like to talk and be talked to when they are playing.⁴⁰ This meant that I could only have informal conversations when, and if, they spent extra time ‘hanging out’. Not all did. Even when casino players and visitors were willing to have a chat this rarely served as a precedent. There were many people I talked with only once, and with whom I did not have the opportunity to develop any kind of relationships after that. This is due to factors such as that I might never have bumped into them again or they were too busy gambling, or they just ignored me the next time and thereafter. As time passed, I realised that the difficulty of building lasting relationships with Chinese individuals was not just due to the typical slow beginnings of settling in the field, but was inherent to the nature of social relationships in the casino.

As I describe in Chapter 5, social relationships are shaped by the spatial and temporal dimensions of the casino, which permit a certain freedom from expected social obligations and reciprocity to others.⁴¹ This sense of loose social connection, however, makes it difficult to trust and be trusted by others.⁴² This became clearer when after nearly a year of slowly building a trusting relationship with Ahmei, she confided to me that her friend Song was a sex worker and that even Ahmei’s daughter did not know about it. This news confirmed my long-held feeling that everybody seemed to be dissimulating part of their identity in the casino and that they thought I was no different from them. Many, for example, never really believed I was a PhD student or that I had a boyfriend. I did have to show my student ID once. But what did it mean anyway? How could I really be a PhD student if I was in the casino every day? I should be at college surely if I was really what I said I was. And how could anyone be carrying out a PhD on such a worthless subject in the first place? Where was my boyfriend? If I really had one, how come he never accompanied me to the casino? They probably had many more questions about who I really was but did not dare to ask. Once some gossip came back to me which suggested that, despite being French, I must be a spy for the British government. Some of my interlocutors in the casino would also warn me about the

40 As Reith (2002: 144) highlights, and as the argument developed in Chapter 3 will demonstrate, this lack of attention on the part of gamblers to their surroundings when they are gambling is collateral to the experience of gambling.

41 With variation of degree since some individuals might know each other from other social spheres.

42 This question of distrust interestingly echoes recent concerns on the matter in China among Chinese sociologists and anthropologists (see Yan 2009b: 286, Yan 2009a).

untrustworthy nature of other individuals. This was flagrant among male interlocutors. Some did not like to 'share' me with other men and ostensibly preferred to 'keep' me for themselves. This would sometimes create tensions and jealousy and put me in difficult positions vis-à-vis my interlocutors.

This lack of social connections and atmosphere of suspicion were further exacerbated by, and in a way directly linked to, the nature of social relationships in an urban setting and the unstable life of migrants. In London, the effect of distance and scarcity of time seemed to impose further hurdles, if only in a practical sense, to strengthen social ties and trust. On several occasions, I lost contact with some of my interlocutors. One woman was not allowed back into the country by immigration officers after a trip to the Netherlands. Another returned home because he had enough of the miserable life he had been through here. Some moved away from London to find a job elsewhere. Others disappeared without notice. The constant movement and lack of social anchorage had the effect that I mainly developed one-to-one relationships and did not get much chance to participate in group interactions. This imposed a further demand for ubiquity. As a result of these different factors, the nature of relationships I entertained in the field varied greatly and was vulnerable to the fragility of ties in the context of migration, London and the casino. This social framework of my fieldwork echoes Yan's description that an increasing part of social interactions are taking part among unrelated individuals in China.

'[I]n a highly mobile and open society, most social interactions occur among individuals who are not related to one another by any particularistic ties; in many cases, people do not expect to interact with the other party again in the future.' (2009b: 285)

Like Amit (2000), I slowly learnt to go with the flow of an unsettled and constantly moving social framework. My quiet and patient persistence did eventually lead me to develop more intimate relationships and discussions but the process was, in practice, long, painstaking, uneven and never immune to sudden changes in individuals' circumstances. Even with Ahmei, who was one of my most talkative and closest interlocutors, it took me nine months, during which I lost track of her for a few months, before I managed to convince her to meet outside the casino for a longer informal chat. That is why, considering the uncertainty in my fieldwork, the ethnography I have produced is more, in echo to Ries' ethnography of everyday conversation in Russia (1997: 3), 'the product of the specific and somewhat random encounters I managed to

have'. Carried out within diverse, and sometimes fleeting, senses of time and space, my fieldwork raises interesting methodological questions regarding the nature of trust and the reliance on lasting social relationships for the collection of data. This somewhat ungraspable nature of the field pushed me to further question the apparent 'natural' boundaries of a Chinese community and of gambling activities in line with a theoretical reflection on time and space. Given the fragmented qualities of fieldwork and the differences between places, I have built on the particularities of my data to focus upon how time and space are experienced by individuals in migration and casino gambling to draw out the specific rationalities at work among Chinese casino players in London. The rest of the chapter develops this distinctive theoretical approach to the study of gambling by pointing out the relevance of specific themes in relation to the context of my research and by considering their theoretical development. Chapter 2 reconsiders what it means to be Chinese in London.

Gambling as social exchange

Contrary to psychological approaches which focus on the individual (Reith 2007, Suissa 2006), anthropologists have always considered gambling to be a social activity which creates certain kinds of social relationships depending on the context in which it takes place. This approach is suggested by theories of social exchange. Anthropologists have developed an exchange theory from complex discussions and rich ethnographies based on the significant role of gift exchange in social life. Marcel Mauss' *Essai sur le Don. Forme et Raison de l'Echange dans les Sociétés Archaïques* (1925, translated in English as *The gift. Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*, 1954) is the most influential work on the topic. Mauss makes a founding argument for further analysis of social exchange: gift exchange creates social ties between individuals. Gift-giving is not a free individual act but is governed by the three obligations of giving, receiving and repaying. This is explained by the fact that the gift is an inalienable object that can never be totally separated from its donor. It is inhabited by the *hau*, the spirit of the donor, which aspires to return back to where it came from. By creating obligations between individuals, the gift also creates the bonds of society. I was struck when re-reading Mauss' central questions in *Essai sur le don* which asks what is this force that propels the constant circulation of gifts ('Quelle force y a-t-il dans la chose qu'on donne

qui fait que le donataire la rend?’ (Mauss 1925: 36)). For me, this question inevitably resonates with the mysterious force that drives gamblers: what is this force that compels them to play for money knowing that most of them will in the long run lose much more than they win? If the big win is a dream they are unlikely to reach, what keeps them going? In the *Essai sur le don*, the power of this force makes sense in relation to other individuals connected to the donor via the exchange of the gift. Individuals are compelled to give and return if they want to be part of society. When unexpectedly observing gambling in the context of their research, anthropologists have had recourse to social exchange theory.

These traditional ethnographies of gambling referred to below need to be revisited in light of more recent theoretical developments regarding social exchange. In this section, I have chosen to focus on studies of gambling in the Pacific region,⁴³ which is conveniently also the heartland of studies of the anthropology of the gift, because the societies which are the object of analyses are typically associated with certain kinds of exchange. I want to demonstrate, on the contrary that certain types of exchange cannot be assumed to prevail in certain types of societies (Appadurai 1986: 11, Carrier 1990: 20, Parry 1986: 465, Parry & Bloch 1989: 8). Many of the anthropologists who analyse gambling in the Pacific region did not expect to find gambling among the population they studied. Zimmer, for example, who had initially set out to study traditional forms of exchange, was reluctant to accept the idea that gambling was worth investigating (1986). Eventually, she realised that gambling was not just an ‘annoying waste of time’ (1986: 246). Her reluctance comes from the fact that gambling was not considered to be a genuine local practice among the communities in this part of the world.⁴⁴ It was regarded as an imported practice, introduced by increasing contact with the West and therefore, somehow ‘inauthentic’.⁴⁵ Gambling makes its appearance when Melanesian communities are integrated into the world economy and the system of state currencies (Akin & Robbins 1999). As a result, ethnographic descriptions generally communicate

43 Besides Melanesia, early analyses of gambling in anthropology were also carried out in the context of other societies and regions: the Eskimos (Riches 1975) the Hadza of Northern Tanzania (Woodburn 1982), Indigenous Australian communities (Altman 1985, Goodale 1987), and Balinese villagers (Geertz 1973). Other ethnographies of gambling will be mentioned during the thesis in relation to relevant themes.

44 Unlike some other ethnographies of gambling where gambling was considered to be an endogenous practice (see previous footnote).

45 For example, Awa migrant workers learnt how to play cards and gamble with the Australian patrol officers and brought back that knowledge to their villages (Hayano 1989).

the anthropologist's happy surprise that gambling is not disrupting the existing system of social exchange, after all.

In Wape society, Mitchell (1988) observes from the point of view of a non-player how a dice game called *satu*, does not, against all odds, destabilise the social structure. On the contrary, it prevents the formation of a hierarchical system based on individual wealth and functions as a redistributive system which encourages giving in order to receive. The Maring play three different games for gambling: *mbeni*, *sandu* and *laki*. Maclean (1984) focused his attention on the last two which are mainly based on chance and where the winner is thus determined randomly. Maclean argues that it is this element of chance that makes gambling a form of gift exchange since it creates an imbalance which forces the (re-)circulation of money. That is what the Maring describe as *bisnis*, a constant flow of money that each member of the community can access through a game of chance. Among the Gende, gambling can also produce social benefits (Zimmer 1986). The money that is lost when gambling makes the winner indebted to the loser in the exchange system. As a result, the necessary repayment of this debt ensures that money is constantly available to be won and won back if lost. Wealthier members are happy to share their income with poorer ones since they know they too would benefit if they fell upon less prosperous times. In this system, Zimmer describes that everyone can actually win something out of the gambling exchange.

The description of gambling practices among the Daulo by Sexton (1987) provides an interesting contrast to this description of gambling as a 'levelling device that deals with the increase of wealth generated by participation in a capitalist market system and a felicitous innovation for maintaining the culture status quo' (Mitchell 1988: 650). Without denying that gambling plays a central role in the construction of social relationships, Sexton shows that rather than maintaining the community as it existed before, gambling articulates a change in the dynamics of social relationships. Economic inequalities and oppositions between gender and generation are to some extent reinforced. By comparing gambling income and household budget, Sexton observes that the circulation of money in gambling increases existing inequalities between wealthy and poorer members of the community. This study highlights that describing gambling as a levelling device has been overstated and overlooks social changes that were also taking place.

This overstatement reflects that the notion of gift exchange in anthropology is ideologically constructed in antithesis to market exchange ‘as non-exploitative, innocent and even transparent’ (Parry & Bloch 1989: 9). In the context of evolutionist explanations that abounded at the time, gift exchange is presented by Mauss as a morally good exchange, lost by modern societies, perverted by the logic of the market and replaced by commodity exchange. This dichotomy has structured the notion of gift exchange in anthropology (see Godbout 1992 and Gregory 1982 for works which reflect this heritage), and has downplayed more nuanced aspects of Mauss’ original analysis which called for a complementarity between self-interest and altruism (Graeber 2001, Hart 2007a, Parry 1986). While inscribing my research within this anthropological tradition of exchange, I want at the same time to detach it from the assumptions that certain forms of exchange belong to certain types of society. Most studies of gambling in anthropology observe the phenomenon of gambling in very traditional fieldwork settings where the community studied is thought to be fairly homogeneous and cohesive, typically the kind of community where gift exchange is assumed to prevail.

While most anthropological studies of gambling propose contrasting alternatives to the anti-social, immoral, homogeneous and static perception of gambling in the West, they also reproduce the dichotomy of self-interest versus altruism. As a result, I propose to use a theory of social exchange formulated in light of more recent arguments made on the notions of barter. By revisiting the notion of barter, Humphrey and Hugh-Jones (1992) demonstrate that the ideological notion of gift exchange and its antithesis, commodity exchange, overlook the diversity of existing forms of exchange and divide them into two distinct camps. Humphrey and Hugh-Jones’ theoretical model is particularly useful to articulate gambling as a form of exchange. First, it argues that all forms of exchange, not just gift exchange, create the bonds of society. This challenges the perception of gambling as an antonym of social cohesion. Secondly, it re-emphasises the point made earlier by Appadurai (1986) and Bourdieu (1994) that all forms of exchange share elements of strategy, calculation and self-interest while they create social links. I think this is also an important point as it argues that individual motivations for gambling are interlinked with the social context in which they take place. Finally, the authors refuse to assume the nature of barter or to consider it an isolated phenomenon, emphasising that it cannot be understood outside its social context.

Following the circulation of money and its multiple movements

A less explored argument in anthropology is that theories of social exchange are guided by our assumptions about money (Maurer 2006). This is apparent in ethnographic accounts of gambling which tend to view money as a negative agent of transformation which disbands a 'good community'. Ethnographic descriptions in Melanesia portray gambling as helping to limit the adverse effects of the introduction of modern money by maintaining some form of solidarity and equality. Similarly, in a Greek village, gambling has been described as becoming a legitimate 'act of defiance against money' (Papataxiarchis 1999: 158) and its destructive qualities. Money is assimilated to be a tool of state domination which inevitably perverts men's social values. Gambling money allows the village's dependence to revert into autonomy. Contrary to general strategies of resistance where money is avoided, the overabundance of money in gambling is not a problem since gambling uniquely destroys the symbol of money by spending it away. This reduction of money as a 'mere object of consumption' (1999: 171) permits, in turn, affirmation of the values of disinterest, sharing and equality.

In contrast to those situations of small-scale communities where gambling is found not to be anti-social, the perception of gambling in Western societies such as the UK is fully embedded in representations of money as threatening both social relationships and the very idea of society itself. The assumptions made about gambling as an individualistic profit-oriented practice and a negation of social relationships are similar to those which are made about money. Anthropological theories which reconsider money are thus extremely relevant to the study of gambling. What anthropologists have challenged about gambling is exactly what they have failed to do about money (Maurer 2006). If it cannot be assumed that gambling is about self-gain and profit, or is a morally bad activity, neither can it be assumed that money has an inherently asocial nature, and, as it has been accused of so many times, that it 'renders social life cold, distant and calculating' (Zelizer 1994: 2). The works of Parry & Bloch (1989) and Zelizer (1994) are very useful to rethink what is meant by gambling since they show that the nature of money cannot be assumed. The arguments they make about money can be applied to gambling. Money has a specific social and cultural meaning within the context where it is used and, as such, cannot be isolated from the social relationships that enable its exchange.

Zelizer in her book *The Social Meaning of Money* makes a very good case for this argument based on a well-documented historical enquiry of the different ways money was earmarked for particular purposes in American households between the 1870s and 1930s. A woman would, for example, dedicate a particular fund to household bills and another fund to school expenses for children. Zelizer argues that '[d]espite its transferability, people make every effort to embed money in particular times, places and social relations' (1994: 18). This is an important point which highlights that money is meaningless without taking into account the social relationships to which it is attached. Money cannot be reduced to the individual.

'Money used for rational instrumental exchange is not 'free' from social constraints but is another type of socially created currency, subject to particular networks of social relations and its own set of values and norms.' (1994: 19)

By demonstrating that modern money has a multiplicity of social meanings, Zelizer (1994) dissipates the evolutionary myth of modern money and its distinction from primitive money. Although 'money has often evolved in order to solve more general problems of time-space coordination' (Leyshon & Thrift 1997: 22-23), it has at the same time multiplied into numerous socially and locally more exclusive forms of money, of which casino chips and loyalty cards are some of the numerous examples (Boyle 2002). As much as primitive money is locally and culturally specific, as is widely illustrated by anthropologists, so is modern money.

'Multiple monies in the modern world may not be as visibly identifiable as the shells, coins, brass rods, or stones of primitive communities, but their invisible boundaries work just as well.' (Zelizer 1994: 24)

Better than that, modern money and primitive monies are not mutually exclusive. As Akin & Robbins' (1999) edited collection *Money and Modernity: State and Local Currencies in Melanesia* illustrates, primitive monies in Melanesian societies do not disappear with the introduction of state currencies but continue to be employed alongside more modern types. As Maurer rightly claimed, '[i]t is not clear that money always flattens social relationships, rather than creating new ones just as complex' (2006: 21). Money, because it is such a versatile tool, can easily adapt to new social dynamics. In that respect, money is a 'fertile ground for analysing change in Melanesia' (1999: 2) and the different ethnographies of the edited collection are variations of how this social process is taking place. These different cases show that it is not money but

the 'modalities of its exchange' which create, maintain or destroy the social structure. It is only when the distinction between different spheres of exchange are not respected that money threatens the system in place.

'If money does not change hands between close kin except in the modality of sharing, for example, then it does not threaten the sphere of kin. It is only once kin begin to buy from and sell to one another, as they did in the Kaliai case, that structural change occurs.' (Akin & Robbins 1999: 15)

At the same time, changes brought about by new forms of money can give opportunities to individuals who did not have access to its power before.

'[M]oney gives rise to individualism in terms that are particularly Melanesian (...) by bolstering already existing kinds of individualist power, at the expense of other, more socially constructive kinds of agency' (1999: 31)

These forms of individualism that are strengthened and made more prominent by money challenge existing forms of social interaction, and as such are often portrayed as in conflict with social interests. Parry & Bloch's wider theoretical framework of two interconnected levels of circulation at the individual and social level is particularly useful to think through the tension between the individual and society. This approach allows us neither to focus more on the individual nor on the collective but to take both equally into account as part of the same system. Within a multiplicity of uses of money, significant regularities can be observed by shifting the focus from an isolated 'consideration of the meanings of money' to 'a consideration of the meanings of whole transactional systems' (1989: 23). These regularities operate at two different levels: a sphere of short-term transactions concerned with the arena of individual competition and a second one concerned with the reproduction of the long-term social or cosmic order (1989: 24). Both are interlinked and interdependent. In that framework, the individualistic objectives are given an 'ideological space within which individual acquisition is a legitimate and even laudable goal' (1989: 26) as long as it is ideologically subordinated to the reproduction of an existing social order.

The other interesting aspect of this analytical framework is that the two transactional orders of different time-scales are necessary to transform money from an immoral to a morally acceptable object of social reproduction. This highlights the fact that it is not sufficient to consider the meanings of money in isolation but that a meaning of money must be read in connection with the whole system of transactional orders in which

money is circulated in order to make sense. Carsten's (1989) ethnography of 'cooking money' in a Malay fishing community is a good example of the interconnection of the two transactional orders and the moral transformation of money from a subversive into a positive social object. Fishermen are willing to take part in commercial exchanges in order to earn money provided they can transact only with strangers as it would be morally unacceptable to do so with kin. Afterwards, the money they have earned is handed over to the women who de-contaminate it into a morally acceptable object on a similar model as the transformation of food from raw to cooked. The women are able to do this because they have not been contaminated in the first place by the commercial transactions. Like cooking, gambling has transformational potential. It enables money to move between transactional orders by virtue of games that convert earnings from household wealth to 'winnings', categories of values that have wholly different associations and create distinct obligations.

Finally, the balance which structures those two transactional orders does not ineluctably contribute to the duration of the existing social order. The durability of social relationships in the long-term sphere of transactions is only maintained as long as the short-term individual competition does not interfere and does not become 'an end in itself' (Parry & Bloch 1989: 25). In the case of a 'mature ideology of capitalism', these regularities would actually need to be reconsidered since the two transactional orders are not separated, the short-term order being inscribed into a long-term reproduction. The analytical framework of Bloch and Parry is based on 'ideologies which have been largely developed outside the centres of capitalism' (1989: 30). This leaves the door open for a reconsideration of their analysis within the context of a capitalist system, which is the case of my research.

Gambling, managing risk and the construction of economic rationality

Strongly defined by common perceptions of money, gambling has become the anti-thesis of economic rationality and gamblers the anti-heroes of *homo economicus*. However, as an activity which involves risking money to potentially earn more, its separation from economic activities aimed at making money, such as working, trading in the stock market, and doing business remains deeply ambiguous. The history of finance in the West highlights that the division between gambling and other forms of

financial speculation which is presented as neutral and natural, is not. In fact, in early modern Europe (De Goede 2004) and in 18th century America (Fabian 1999 [1990]), there was no real conceptual difference between the two. The distinction grew gradually in order to legitimise finance as a rational world (De Goede 2005). The prohibition and marginalization of gambling in 19th century America (Fabian 1999 [1990]) and Britain (Downes et al. 1976) worked to segregate chance, quick gains and risk-taking as unique to gambling behaviour while the same values found a place in the economic rationality of capitalism (Downes et al. 1976).

‘Men and women were asked to give up the games of chance which fostered an unnatural or irrational thirst for gain and encouraged expenditure without an immediate return, while enhanced opportunities for speculative gain were made available in commercial markets.’ (Fabian 1999 [1990]: 10)

By condemning gambling, ‘the rational search for gain [is] constructed’ (Fabian 1999 [1990]: 2). ‘The values in gambling are by no means peculiar to it or foreign to the broader culture’ (Downes et al. 1976: 24), but they have been divided in two different kinds: those which are claimed to serve a rational cause and those which are not. As ‘primitive man’ was opposed to the universal model of *homo economicus* (Pearson 2000),⁴⁶ so was the gambler. While gambling became the bad example not to follow, trading in the stock market or setting up a business became socially valued ways to prove one’s performance. For traders, taking financial risks is a ‘productive’ process (Zaloom 2004, 2006) where personhood is built on the individual ability to manipulate risk under conditions of hazard and possibility in order to make a profit. The trader, modern hero of financial speculation, shares the same positive aura of the entrepreneur, figurehead of capitalist conquest and an example to imitate. The impact of the recent crisis on the ‘trader as hero’ figure remains to be seen, but history suggests resilience rather than defeat is the most likely response.

‘Entrepreneur’ is a loanword from French. It comes from the verb ‘entreprendre’ which means to undertake, to take action in order to accomplish a project set by oneself.⁴⁷ Although already in common usage in references to all sort of activities, it was re-appropriated by economists in the early 19th century to describe more specifically

⁴⁶ As Pearson (2000: 978) interestingly argues, the disciplines of economy and anthropology have grown apart: the former defending the universal model of the economic man and the latter against it.

⁴⁷ See Petit Robert, dictionnaire alphabétique et analogique de la langue française, 2010.

someone undertaking an enterprise by means of labour and capital with the intention of making a profit.⁴⁸ This definition reflects the time and context in which it started to be used more widely, a time when industrial capitalism in the West flourished and when the industrialist replaced the merchant as the dominant actor of capitalism (Ricketts 2006). However, in pre-industrial times, the entrepreneur was a more ambiguous figure, often considered to be a villain and a speculator, no better than a gambler, rather than a hero (MacRae 1980). The construction of the gambler as an irrational economic actor reinforces the ideal models of the trader and the entrepreneur as *homo economicus* who know how to efficiently take risks for fruitful rewards.

This attitude of risk domestication and the notion of risk itself are representative of the period we are in, the ‘age of chance’ (Reith 2002), in which the capricious laws of uncertainty are now believed to rule the world in place of fate and divine intervention. In the last four hundred years, propelled by numerical tools to apprehend future events, the notion of chance has evolved from a status of determinism to one of indeterminism (Gigerenzer et al. 1989, Hacking 1990, Lears 2003, Reith 2002). Before, chance in both Chinese and Greek traditions was understood as fate or destiny and evoked the idea that ‘there [was] a set or immutable pattern to the world’ which was under the management of divine commands (Raphals 2003: 357, 560). Now chance has become a concept in its own right, separated ‘from broadly religious notions of divine providence and fate’ (Reith 2002: 13). It was the emergence of probability from the mid-seventeenth century, its development as a tool of measurement and the systematic use of statistics in the nineteenth century which created the existence of chance as pure randomness (Hacking 1990). Indeterminism developed as a valid scientific concept because it was ‘tamed’ by the use of probability and statistics (Hacking 1990). In contrast, those seen to believe in chance without applying the laws of probability or to engage with risk without making a profit, like the majority of gamblers are portrayed, are still thought to belong to a long gone world, that of superstitions and irrational beliefs. Veblen’s comments that gamblers’ belief in luck is reminiscent of the barbaric past are still prevalent today:

‘[The belief in luck] is to be taken as an archaic trait, inherited from a more or less remote past, more or less incompatible with the requirements of the modern industrial process,

48 The term ‘entrepreneur’ became particularly popular with Richard Cantillon and his *Essai sur la Nature du Commerce en Général* (first published posthumously in 1755). See Hébert & Link 1989 for more detail.

and more or less of a hindrance to the fullest efficiency of the collective economic life of the present.’ (1970 [1915]: 183)

However, as Comaroff & Comaroff (2005 [2000]) argue, the moral exclusion of gambling from the domain of work and earning is now being challenged. It is part of a global movement where ‘production appears to have been superseded, as the *fons et origo* of wealth, by less tangible ways of generating value. (...). In short, by the market and by speculation.’ (2005 [2000]: 178). The distinctions between gambling, the market, speculation and work are everywhere becoming more blurred. This is because the desire now is to accrue wealth from nothing, without production, without efforts. We are in a global era of ‘neoliberal capitalism’ (2005 [2000]: 184) where ‘complaints of greed have become more strident [and] moral apologies for it have become increasingly brazen’ (Robertson 2001: 221). This movement is, nevertheless, taking different shapes as it is locally and socially constructed.

In the UK, the border between gambling and finance has become increasingly challenged with the legalization of gambling since the 60s and unstable movements in the global financial market since the 1973 crisis. This confusion culminates in the recent use by the media of ‘casino capitalism’⁴⁹ to describe the market since the 2008 financial crisis (Cassidy 2009b). This arbitrary division of gambling and finance became particularly apparent during fieldwork when a trading company used a young professional network event as a way to promote their spread betting products to a Chinese population. Spread betting⁵⁰ is a good example of the ambiguous relationship between gambling and finance since it has a foot in each camp. It is a bet on the outcome of any event where the more accurate the gamble, the more is won, and conversely, the less accurate the more is lost.⁵¹ Considered under the Finance Act 2002,⁵² spread betting is not regulated by the Gambling Commission but the Financial Services Authority. Despite its separation from the Gambling Act 2005, it is nevertheless, like any other gambling win, tax free, a point happily emphasized by

49 ‘Casino capitalism’ is the title of a book by Susan Strange (1997[1986]) where the financial market is likened to a casino as a means of criticizing the weaknesses of the international financial market as they appeared in the 1970s and early 1980s.

50 A bet is made against a ‘spread’ (or index), on whether the outcome will be above or below the spread. The amount won or lost depends on the level of the index at the end of the event.

51 The pay-off is based on the accuracy of the wager’s predictions. A spread is a range of outcomes and the bet is whether the outcome will be above or below the spread.

52 Financial Act 2002, section 13.

trading companies to attract new customers to this very profitable product.⁵³ When I approached the spokesperson of the trading company sponsoring the networking event, my interest was strongly dismissed with the statement that ‘spread betting isn’t gambling’.⁵⁴

In China, the beginning of the Shanghai stock market in the late 80s and early 90s witnessed the ‘stories of people who bought [share certificates] by mistake and unexpectedly became wealthy overnight’ (Gamble 1997: 186). Everybody was contaminated by this stock fever; it was the era of the ‘trading crowd’ and of a new hero, the 大户 *dahu*,⁵⁵ who made fortune overnight (Hertz 1998). The appearance of this new way of making money offered new opportunities beside one’s salary as the only source of income and gave ‘a strong sense of an increased scope for individual agency and individualism’ (Gamble 1997: 202). In the village of Lanying in the North of China, a minority of the inhabitants has experienced in the last few years ‘windfall wealth’ with the arrival of mining companies (Zhang 2010). This sudden turn of fate is generating feelings of envy from some villagers who have not benefited from the flows of fortune and who, as a result, turn to gambling and petit crime in the hope of getting lucky. In both cases, work is devalued, sometimes even relinquished in preference for trading or gambling which are seen to offer more opportunities and more scope for the expression of one’s agency.

These economic and social changes should not be interpreted as signs that China is becoming ‘swamped’ by global capitalism and its neoliberal logic. Rather, as the next section shows, neoliberal rationality is re-appropriated on Chinese terms. This can be observed through the process of individualisation and social mobility that are taking place in China. These questions are pertinent to the context of my research since Chinese migration to London is part of that process and since Chinese overseas are rethinking themselves in line with the image of the strong economic power that China has now become.

53 Spread betting exposes the better to more financial risks than a normal bet. This is because, in comparison to a bet where you lose the money you originally bet when you bet £10 you can lose £10, with spread betting the loss is potentially unlimited. From a £2 starting bet you can potentially make £1000 or more but you can also lose £1000 or more.

54 My subsequent attempts to access their Chinese customers were turned down in the end by the management, but I nevertheless managed to discuss the topic with a couple of my interlocutors who like to spread bet from time to time.

55 Literally meaning ‘big player’, the 大户 *dahu* is a very successful trader in the Shanghai stock market who handles big sums of investment and can influence market trends (Gamble 1997, Hertz 1998).

The individual and social mobility in China and beyond

China and its dazzling economic development regularly make the headlines. In the UK, commentaries depict how the Chinese Nation is catching up with ‘us’, a bit more everyday,⁵⁶ and debate whether she will become the next superpower,⁵⁷ or whether she will be dethroned by her rival to the position, India.⁵⁸ The pace of her rapid growth fills many of us with wonder, fear and confusion. China is becoming a powerful economy of the same calibre as those of the West but it has no democracy: how can that be?

‘The question for observers of China is: How can free markets, private property, and private pursuits normally associated with advanced liberal economies flourish in a socialist configuration?’ (Zhang & Ong 2008: 3).

As Zhang and Ong (2008) argue in their edited collection *Privatizing China: Socialism from Afar*, a full development of self-interest is not incompatible with a strong control of the state; it creates a ‘particular articulation of neoliberalism’ that they call ‘socialism from afar’ (2008: 2-3). The quest for private gains develops within the limits imposed by the Chinese authoritarian state provided that it supports the governing endeavour. Even though neoliberalism has primarily appeared in a Western context, it also develops in different configurations. This argument interestingly opposes homogenising and ethnocentric views of neoliberalism to demonstrate that ‘as a technology for governing and for achieving optimal growth’ (2008: 3) it is better understood as ‘a mobile set of calculative practices that articulate diverse political environments in a contingent manner’ (2008: 9). Within China and among Chinese overseas elsewhere, neoliberal rationality and its focus on economic growth have been re-appropriated as a way to affirm an alternative to the dominance of the West, an hegemony with Chinese specificities (Ong 1995, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2006, Ong & Nonini 1997). In these discourses, the narrative of a Confucian ethic, re-appropriated to justify the pursuit of wealth (Ong 1999: 144) replaces the Weberian one (Tu 1996, and see Rarick 2007 for

56 Dyer, Geoff. 2009. China becomes third largest economy, *Financial Times*, January 14; www.ft.com/cms/s/0/8d9337be-e245-11dd-b1dd-0000779fd2ac.html. The article starts with the statement that ‘China overtook Germany to become the world’s third-largest economy in 2007’.

57 Rachman, Gideon. 2010. Rising China is a real contender, *Financial Times*, March 16; www.ft.com/cms/s/0/0b38f1ea-309c-11df-a24b-00144feabdc0.html.

58 Lamont, James, Russell, Alec & Kazmin, Amy. 2009. India’s economy ‘more durable’ than China, *Financial Times*, March 31; www.ft.com/cms/s/0/d6298d84-1e04-11de-830b-00144feabdc0.html. Debate on Radio 4: ‘Will India or China be the next superpower?’, 12 May 2009, Today programme, London: Radio 4.

an example of such narrative), and being self-entreprising is advanced as a characteristic of being Chinese today (Zhang & Ong 2008). This characterisation must inform any attempt to better understand gambling as it is practiced by and associated with the Chinese expatriate community.

Self-enrichment, before only a prerogative of Chinese overseas, is now widely encouraged in China and the Deng Xiaoping slogan of the 1980s, ‘To be rich is glorious’ (富裕光荣 *fuyu guangrong*)⁵⁹ seems more than ever topical. Self-interest has become good for the Nation and commercial success, a token of individual ability and talent. This has made entrepreneurs, the new heroes of the nation, replacing Lei Feng,⁶⁰ the selfless model of communist China (Farquhar 1996, Guiheux 2009, Liao & Sohmen 2001, Yueh 2008). It has also turned the overseas Chinese businessman, formerly a traitor, into a great patriot in the eyes of the Chinese state (Nyíri 2005). It is now modern tales of hero-entrepreneurs that depict the lives of extraordinary individuals achieving success everywhere in the media which tell Chinese people how to be good citizens (Guiheux 2009). Behind this image of the entrepreneur, an idea is made implicit: that every individual equally possess the abilities to achieve success. That is what Yan attests to be ‘the emergence of the notion of a Chinese dream, i.e. belief that one could change one’s fate through intelligence and hard work’ (2009: xvii). Chapter 4 describes in more details how these dreams of riches are driving Chinese individuals in their journey to the UK.

This unusual development of a neoliberal line of reasoning in a context of an authoritarian state engenders an unprecedented and atypical individualisation of Chinese society which has only recently been given attention in academia (Delman & Yin 2008, Hansen & Pang 2008, Hansen & Svarverud 2009, Thøgersen & Anru 2008, Yan 2008, 2009, Zhang & Ong 2008). As this literature explains, the rise of the individual in China cannot be equated with the notion of individualism or the Western values of individual rights (Yan 2009, Zhang & Ong 2008). Chinese individuals have to take full

⁵⁹ Slogan mentioned in Ong & Zhang (2008: 14).

⁶⁰ Lei Feng was a soldier of the People’s Liberation Army who died on duty at the age of 22 in 1962. After his death, he was made a hero by the Maoist propaganda and was praised as the personification of altruism. Chinese youth was indoctrinated to follow his example of selflessness, modesty and dedication during the years 1960-70 in order to duly serve their country. Although in the post-Mao era, the authenticity of Lei Feng’s life as a hero was questioned, he remains to this day a cultural icon in China (for more detail see Zhang 1999).

responsibility for their own wellbeing and self-development but they do not benefit from the support of the welfare state and are not encouraged to exert individuality which contradicts the state in the public sphere (see Delman & Yin 2008 for the example of an individual breaching state control). Drawing on 20 years of ethnography in China, Yan attempts to show how this new phenomenon in China is different from that of Western Europe since ‘the Chinese case simultaneously demonstrates pre-modern, modern and post-modern conditions’ (2009: 291). Individualisation in China develops without the conditions of a democratic and welfare state while it tries to address concerns of ‘the first modernity of Western Europe, such as comfortable material life, secure employments, welfare benefits, and freedom to travel, speak, and engage in public activities’ (2008: 9). At the same time, it takes place ‘in a post-modern environment where a fluid labour market, flexible employment, increasing personal risks and isolation, a culture of intimacy and self-expression, and a greater emphasis on individuality and self-reliance are created by the trend of the globalisation in the context of the political authoritarianism of the party-state’ (2008: 9).

According to Yan (2009, 2008), the conditions of globalisation are giving a central role to social mobility in this process of individualisation in China. Disembedment from traditional social categories⁶¹ is unusually accompanied by increased opportunities for mobility. As a result of market needs and political reforms untying Chinese individuals from the constraints of the collectives and the planned economy, rural dwellers are migrating to the big cities (Zhang 2001) or abroad (Li 1999, Liu 1997) in the hope to get rich. In that context, the personage of the entrepreneur conveys ambiguous messages, idealising the belief that upward mobility is equally available to all, while praising the exceptional qualities of unique and extraordinary individuals. In fact, as Yan shows through his examination of household incomes in Xiajia⁶² from 1989 to 2008 the gap between the rich and poor has increased (2009: xx-xxi). More opportunities for social mobility are in this case associated with greater inequalities of access.

61 Disembedment from external social constraints is a key element of Beck & Beck-Gernsheim’s (2002) description of the individualisation process in Western Europe (see Yan 2008, 2009 for a more in-depth discussion of this point).

62 Xiajia is the name of the village where Yan has carried out fieldwork regularly since 1989 and where he lived and worked as a farmer for 7 years from 1971 to 1978.

Because the individual has rarely been advanced as a relevant unit of analysis for understanding Chinese society, Yan's claim that individualisation is taking place sounds groundbreaking. His theory seems particularly so given that individual agency has been underexplored in studies of Chinese societies. The historians Lee & Campbell (1997) rightly show that social scientists, especially anthropologists, have had a tendency to focus on kin structure and, as such, have limited analysis of individual behaviour to its relation to the description and interpretation of those social structures. Yan breaks this trend. However, it is important to acknowledge that individual agency and social mobility already existed in Chinese society. This aspect tends to be kept quiet which can give the impression that Chinese people did not have a conception of the individual before the recent economic and social changes that have taken place in China. As Kleinman mentions in the foreword to Yan's book, 'individuals mattered even in a society characterized by collective relations and interpersonal structures' (2009: xiii). Unfortunately, little attention is given to the contribution of works which tackle this question. Lee & Campbell's (1997) original demographic study of social organisation in rural Liaoning from 1774 to 1873 is an example. It demonstrates how social mobility in late imperial rural China operated at the individual level. Individuals acted according to 'two social myths', that of 'heredity', the belief that 'social mobility [is] beyond the realm of individual control', and that of 'ability', the belief that 'individuals [can] exercise at least some control over their own destiny' (1997: 213-214). The fact that this work on the Chinese individual was carried out in the 18th and 19th centuries supports the idea that individualism predated the recent transformations. As such, it also suggests that Yan's argument of individualisation in China should be tempered in light of earlier concepts of the individual in China.

Following the works of Yan and Lee & Campbell, I want to show in this thesis that the individual as a unit of analysis needs to be given more attention within studies of Chinese society and of Chinese overseas.⁶³ It is useful not only in order to counterbalance popular and academic old-time assumptions that Chinese people are more collective but also it is better adapted to the context of a highly mobile Chinese population.

63 Following the example of Pieke & Mallee's (1999) edited collection *Internal and international migration: Chinese perspectives*, I do not want to make a distinction between studies of Chinese population in China and outside China. This thesis is a contribution to the pertinent connection of those two customarily distinct fields.

Conclusion

The ethnographic method, I argued in the introduction, is better adapted to capture the diversity of gambling behaviours within the context of their practices. Saying this, the fluid and eclectic nature of my fieldwork raised a number of methodological challenges: ubiquity between different social spaces, rhythms and between individuals; social stigma about gambling; my marginality as a researcher in the casino; lack of time availability among the Chinese working population; difficulty to build trustful and long-term relationships in the casino; a highly mobile, diverse and scattered population; fragility of social ties in a context of migration and in London's urban environment. These challenges were a fertile ground on which to rethink critically and creatively what gambling is about and how to study it within the specific context of the research and beyond the roads already traced.

The themes of exchange, money and rationality all indicated that self-interest, or what appeared to be a self-interested act, had social foundations. This makes gambling practices a good place to observe the tension and ambiguity between the individual, others, and society. It is also a timely problematic. For a long time overlooked, the individual has become a concept of analysis in China in reaction to the economic and social changes taking place there. My fieldwork among Chinese casino players in London offers an additional point of anchorage to develop a vanguard discussion in light of recent theoretical arguments on those questions. This thesis is then guided by the following questions: what sort of social relationships and individuals are being produced when Chinese casino players gamble? What does this social dynamic tells us about the meaning of gambling for Chinese casino players?

Chapter 2

Being Chinese in London

In a recent article discussing the contemporary relevance of the terms ‘community’, ‘society’ and ‘culture’ Godelier re-affirms the fact that Chinese overseas are the prime and typical model of a community in a given country:

‘[A]ll big cities in the world have a Chinatown, where Chinese continue to speak their own language, follow their own holiday calendar, and run restaurants. They form communities, but these are not societies.’ (2010: 7)

For Godelier, giving the example of Chinatowns dispersed over the world is enough to explain what is a community. This re-affirmation of Chinese communities as clearly bonded groups ready to be discovered by the researcher seems, a priori, to ignore the now well-recognised fact that their populations are becoming more and more diversified (Benton & Gomez 2008, Liu 2005, Nyiri 2005, Pharoah et al. 2009, Pieke 2007). In fact, I argue, recent studies of Chinese overseas communities have not totally given up their attachment to the ideals of social cohesion rooted in community. Assumptions have not been abandoned but displaced to a more micro-level of analysis, the sub-category, which implies that ‘[t]here is a unity amidst diversity’ (Wong 2006: 158, Beck 2007, Chiu 2003, Hsu 2007, Lam et al. 2009, Liu 2005, Sales et al. 2009, Tjon Sie Fat 2009). Heterogeneity is being re-ordered in communal compartments.

The problem with this focus on sub-categories is that the constant work of social connections and disconnections through which individuals negotiate their Chinese identity tends to get overlooked. In reaction to this imbalance, my study of Chinese gamblers is a deliberate cut through meaning (Candea 2007) that reveals the rich versatility of ways individuals shape their selves as Chinese persons in London. For this, I take inspiration from the work of Toyota about Chinese identities among Akha⁶⁴ in the China, Burma and Thai borderlands which provides ‘a valuable paradigm of how identities are shaped at crossing points, intersections and on the periphery and through the internal and external imaginaries of ethnic categorisation’ (2003: 304). This

64 The Akha are a hill tribe of subsistence farmers who as Toyota explains in her article are spread out over different countries. China (Yunnan), Myanmar and Thailand are the contexts which are explored in the article but Akha can also be found in Laos.

approach is particularly relevant to my object of research since it highlights the false rigidity of the categories ‘Chinese’ and ‘gambler’ and the far more flexible and diverse social connections between individuals it overlooks. As will become clearer throughout the rest of this thesis, it is similarly problematic to consider gamblers as a homogeneous group. My ethnography shows that Chinese gamblers are too diverse and disconnected to be gathered under a single label. Consequently, this chapter focuses on different individual experiences of being Chinese in London, with the aim of giving an idea of the extent of the heterogeneity and fragmentation involved. The aim of the description is not to be exhaustive but to evoke what being Chinese in London means for a number of different individuals. The meanings do not necessarily cross with each other and can be the product of very unequal situations; they are not given but constructed and re-constructed in the ongoing interaction of individuals with others. This chapter is a small window looking into the rich array of perspectives about being Chinese in London.

Drawing on the specific circumstances of a Chinese actress who grew up in the UK, and, later, on her family story, I expose her difficulties to negotiate her identity under the label ‘Chinese community’. At the same time, I show that the existence of a ‘community’ is a necessary point of reference to anchor what it means to be Chinese on her own terms. Then, I trace back the making of the ‘Chinese community’ in the UK through an historical account of migration flows, settlements and encounters with British society and through individual stories of migration.

In the second part of this chapter, from the contrasting experiences of living in London as a Chinese person between a Mainland Chinese mother and her daughter, I explore recent changes in Chinese migration to the UK — not from the paradigm of the community but from the specificities of those individual cases. I then discuss the tendency to oppose the new migrants against the old ones to show that the representation of a Chinese culture and identity as a pre-existing whole is still reproduced by the description of sub-groups. In contrast, I argue that individuals always straddle different categories and also move in and out of them over time, and that as such, it is more pertinent to look at the social connections which have made, are making and will make a Chinese person. Gambling, as I will show, is one of many forms of exchange that enable and constrain these transformations.

Ildigo: not fitting in the box

‘I think people always try to put you in a box’ – Leo,
British Born Chinese, early 30s

The first time I met Ildigo, after two minutes of initial chitchat, she asked me: ‘So, what kind of assumptions do you have about Chinese people?’ For her, a lot of Westerners have stereotypes about Chinese people that they need to be challenged on. She is often infuriated by the lack of understanding that we, Westerners, have about, them, the Chinese. She believes that there is too much ignorance and racism on the West’s part, and a general lack of desire to understand the East. She feels it is important to educate anyone who makes, or what she feels is, an ignorant comment about the Chinese and takes the opportunity to do so when it arises. However, she admits it is difficult to change people’s opinions about what is Chinese and what is not. Ildigo thinks that the main reason for this lies in the fact that the Chinese community in the UK, compared to the Black, Asian or even East European communities is invisible, largely overlooked. Chinese people in the UK are perceived to be passive, to keep to themselves and to not engage politically. This view is also commonly shared by many other Chinese people and the UK society at large and is not new (Benton & Gomez 2008). This lack of voice and invisibility is an underlying concern brought forward by the Home Affairs Committee in its 1985 report about the hidden problems of the Chinese community in Britain. A short ethnographic film called *We Keep Quiet* portrays this silence as the main characteristic of the community.⁶⁵ In 2007, this concern was still high on the agenda: the Chinese in Britain Forum, an advocacy charity for the Chinese community in the UK, dedicates its annual conference, entitled *Success for Our Children: Missed Opportunities for our Community*, to this theme.⁶⁶ More recently, a report commissioned by the Chinese Britain Forum exploring the changes which are reshaping Chinese migration to the UK reaffirms the problem of invisibility (Pharoah et al. 2009).

‘[I]t is (...) a community that is not seen as being a problem and which is therefore often ignored or overlooked’ (2009: 19)

65 The film was made by a M.A. student in the Visual Anthropology Department of Goldsmiths, University of London, during the Academic year 2006-2007, and was shown as part of the film festival ‘Spotlight Beijing’ in 2008. It is available for viewing at www.gold.ac.uk/anthropology.

66 The conference was mainly tackling the lack of political engagement within the Chinese community. A higher number of people not registered to vote are Chinese (30% according to the 2001 Census).

Ildigo is a striking counter-example of this generalisation that Chinese people are passive and quiet. She is outspoken and longs for the voice of her community to be heard as much as anyone else's. How she represents herself is driven by the feeling that her community is constantly trying to show that they are here but that their voice is constantly being stifled. At the same time, she depicts her community as an accomplice to their muteness and lack of representation since, for her, its attention is mainly directed at the catering business and the education of children, nothing else. Ildigo remembers with naivety and frustration coming back from school and complaining to her mother, 'They call me this today!', referring to repeated racist name-calling, to be given the simple advice, 'Just ignore it'. She painfully discovered that this did not work, no matter how hard she tried. Now, Ildigo is reacting against the model of passive silence set by her parents and the fact that they never addressed the issue of racism at home or at school. By being outspoken and not following her mother's example, Ildigo is paradoxically distancing herself from this same community that she is trying to defend. Fighting for her community to have a voice is a way for Ildigo to fight the image of a community that does not fit the individual she has become. In that process, Ildigo is creating a more positive image for her 'group of belonging', an image that more closely matches her sense of self. Whilst Ildigo is on a crusade against stereotypes, she tells me that she also feels slightly uneasy and overwhelmed that someone is interested in 'them', the Chinese. She has been invited to tell her 'story' (her family story starting with the migration of her grandfather to the UK – see later account of Ildigo's paternal grandfather's migration to the UK) only once in her life, when she was 32. This was part of a theatrical project. She finds it hard to believe that there is actually someone like me eager to listen, and what is more, willing to understand her community.

Ildigo is now 37. She is what is known as a BBC, British Born Chinese.⁶⁷ She was born and raised in the UK from a Chinese Malaysian mother who came to the UK to study nursing and a Chinese father who was born and raised in South Wales from Chaozhou parents.⁶⁸ Although Ildigo is clearly Chinese by ancestry, she, like other BBCs, struggles to negotiate her relationship with the Chinese community which she is part of (Parker 1995). She finds it hard to reconcile being part of a group identity with her own

⁶⁷ From now on referred to as BBC only.

⁶⁸ Chaozhou is a prefecture-level city in northeastern Guangdong Province in China (see map 4).

sense of self. Ildigo is an actress. Her father wanted her to be a lawyer. As an actress, she is not fulfilling the social expectations that her parents had for her. Neither is she conforming to the perception of the outside world of what Chinese people normally do. Ildigo is also uncomfortable with the fact that she cannot speak Mandarin, or any other Chinese dialect fluently. She cannot bear it when people are surprised that she cannot speak Chinese. She never knows what to say. In the end, she came up with the reply 'Speak to my mother', in effect saying, 'It's not my fault, I wasn't spoken to in Chinese for long enough so that I could learn it'. It feels as if Ildigo is ashamed of not being Chinese enough. At the same time she cannot escape having to build her identity around the fact that *she is Chinese*.

Ildigo finds the label Chinese particularly problematic in her acting career. She explains that the trend is often to cast Chinese actors for their Chinese look, to play a Chinese role, but not to play any role. This makes her a Chinese actress before being an actress. Ildigo compares the situation with Black people in the US and explains how someone like Will Smith manages to obtain acting roles, not because he is Black and there is a need to fill a Black person role, but because he is considered a good actor. Ildigo finds it hard to be recognised as an individual for the sake of her own ability. She is frustrated to be seen with the lens of the Chinese group characteristics and not as a person that exists beyond the limits of her group identity. Being Chinese is an obstacle to her own efforts to construct a positive identity for herself. The responsibility of her ambiguous relationship with this identity is attributed to the outside world, those who are neither Chinese or ethnic looking and cannot understand what it is like to be the other, to be the one misunderstood. This sense of otherness makes her feel closer to other ethnic minorities in the UK than to her own community, and especially her parents' generation. Once, she participated in a theatre project that brought together different backgrounds: Black, Indian, Chinese, and even White. She has a happy memory of that time where racist jokes were common as a way to go beyond those portrayed racial differences. 'That is such a Black thing to do that', she would say to one, while the other would tell her off about 'what a chink she is', and they will all have a good laugh about it. The use of racist discourses among ethnically diverse communities of young people has been more extensively discussed by Back (1996) in his study of two estates in South London.

Ildigo's experience of being between two cultures is common to most BBCs. As demonstrated by Parker (1995) in his book *Through Different Eyes: The Cultural Identities of Young Chinese People in Britain*, the negotiation of this place in-between varies greatly from individual to individual but is always a way to accommodate how one is being perceived and discriminated against as a minority. Although Ildigo's specific circumstances are unique and cannot be generalized to any other Chinese person, BBC or Chinese actor, they are informative of the need to reshape what is meant by 'Chinese community' in ways which reflect individuals' experience of being Chinese in London. For this reason, being part of a Chinese community is to be differentiated from the ascribed idea of a Chinese community in a host country.

The idea of a Chinese community

At first, the term 'Chinese community' seems self-contained and self-explanatory, it is a group of migrants which has settled in the UK and comes from the same geographical and cultural place, China. It is set to describe a fact: the existence of a social group whose members share a culture which is different from that of the host society. The continuous reference to the term community when talking about Chinese in the UK makes me wonder: Is the term 'Chinese community' as objective and comprehensive as it pretends to be? And can it really encompass the variety of ways different individuals negotiate their Chinese identity? These questions are not new in essence and refer to a long tradition in sociology and anthropology about the use of 'community' (Alleyne 2002, Amit 2002, Amit & Rapport 2002, Baumann 1995, 1996, Cohen 1985, Ortner 1997, Stoller & McConatha 2001) and 'culture' (Abu-Lughod 1991, Clifford 1988, Goody 1992, Gupta & Ferguson 1992, 1997b, Kuper 1999). I do not wish so much to recapitulate the history of the debate about community which has been addressed elsewhere (see Amit 2002, Amit & Rapport 2002, Alleyne 2002, Miranda 2002), but I believe I cannot speak of 'Chinese community' without explaining why the labels 'community' and 'Chinese identity' still have an appeal to some and what is the impact such categories have on individuals' understanding of their own reality. The point here is to be aware of the connotations the term 'community' carries and why someone like Ildigo battles to reshape its meaning on her own terms.

‘Chinese community’ is widely used precisely because it is naturally legitimate in appearance. In ‘community’, there is the idea that Chinese people inevitably share something in common since they belong to the same group. In opposition to the representation of society as a contract between individuals, the term ‘community’ is originally understood as a natural and organic social organisation, similar to kinship ties (Tönnies 1944). It is mapped onto an ideal representation of the family where harmony, equality and solidarity reign. Like race (Rivera 2000: 116), the concept of community justifies cultural and social differences via a biological metaphor which makes belonging to a community ineluctable. This legitimisation of a community as a natural phenomenon gives the illusion that it has always been there and that its existence and characteristics must be taken for granted. It is a convenient shell whose content varies to represent the view of the speaker at a certain time and place, which describes the Chinese as a timeless other (Fabian 1983). Although this makes it a very malleable concept that actors can adapt to their particular circumstances and experience of community making (Gray 2002, Howell 2002, Olwig 2002), it also makes it a tool of power and domination (Miranda 2002). Therefore it can feel both meaningful and meaningless, inclusive and exclusive.

‘Chinese community’ also reflects a power relationship. It is a Western concept crafted on the idea of what Chinese people and a Chinese social formation looks like. As argued by Anderson about Vancouver’s Chinatown, the idea of ‘Chinese community’, ‘like race, is an idea that belongs to the ‘white’ European cultural tradition’ (1987: 580), an orientalism exoticising the other at home to better define ourselves (March 1974, Said 1978). The term ‘Chinese community’ is not used to represent a unique Chinese perception of the group. It delimits one of the numerous elements which make up UK society. This does not mean that Chinese representations of the world and of how society and individuals interact are absent from the concept, but that they are being shaped by the conception of a group membership in the UK political context. To some extent, the construction of this exotic other at home is still a product of its time, the 19th century when the first Chinese settlers came to Britain and Europe and when racial differences were more strongly ascribed. As much as the ‘Chinese community’ still carries the burden of its origin, the description of a core Chinese identity in a Western context also gets entangled with the ideological discourse of a stable and unchangeable Chinese culture and identity as advocated by Chinese themselves.

The term 'Chinese diaspora' best represent this discourse where all Chinese ethnics are idealised to share common values and norms despite distance and time (Ang 2001, Ong & Nonini 1997: 7, Wang 2004a). This cultural unity resonates with how the Chinese identity and nation were constructed in the first place (Dikötter 1992). Overseas Chinese, like Han Chinese, widely cultivate an ideology of common descent to perpetuate the idea of a pure Chinese race (Dikötter 1992, Pan 1990).⁶⁹ In fact, this popular historical version downplays mixing between Han Chinese and local indigenous (Dikötter 1992, Pan 1990: 14) and gives an exaggerated importance to sinicisation as a one-way system of assimilation (Crossley, Siu & Sutton 2006, Wang 2004b). Such historical accounts by Chinese overseas reflect a hierarchical conception of Chinese culture where China is the centre and Chinese settlements elsewhere are peripheral residuals looking up to their cultural model (Tu 2005). Like for the Chinese nation (Ong 1995, 1997), the cultural unity implied in the concept of diaspora is necessary to affirm the control of power (Ang 2001). That is why it is very important who gets to be the custodian, the keeper of this authenticity (Hosbsbawn & Ranger 1992). This means that, in practice, different Chinese groups are competing for control of this power. It is not rare, for example, to hear Chinese overseas claiming a purer cultural heritage than Mainland Chinese due to the fact that they did not experience the Cultural Revolution (Loussouarn 2001). What the term 'community' hides is that behind the appearance of harmony and solidarity, there is real competition over economic and symbolic resources between Chinese people from different regions of China or other parts of the world (Christiansen 2003), from different socio-economic backgrounds, from different generations or any other differential factors. In each context the construction of a common identity is a response to political and economic interests in a certain environment.

In the UK, the construction of a Chinese community is a common project between the state, community leaders, who do not necessarily represent the needs of the majority, and economic stakeholders.⁷⁰ Their cooperation is illustrated in London's Chinatown (Benton & Gomez 2008). It is also more recently being re-shaped by the revival of Chinese nationalism among new Chinese migrants integrating different Chinese

69 Overseas Chinese commonly claim to all be descendants of the mythical Yellow Emperor (Pan 1990).

70 In some other countries, although Chinese people are willing to integrate and become part of the local population, they might still be treated as outcasts by political and nationalist discourses (Christiansen 2003, Pan 1990).

overseas communities worldwide (Liu 2005). In its very early stage, the Chinese nation is constructed onto the discourse of a Chinese identity based on race (Dikötter 1992). Before print capitalism, Chinese nationalism was prefiguring the construction of an 'imagined community' (Anderson 1991). In a context of global capitalism, Chinese elites in China and in other countries re-appropriate the sense of common identity beyond borders and exemplify it in the transnational migrant as a way to challenge the hegemony of the West (Ong 1997, Ong & Nonini 1997). Being Chinese in London must now also be understood within this ideology of Chinese constructing 'alternative modernities' (Ong 1997, Ong & Nonini 1997). That is why, I would argue in line with Ong and Nonini (1997) that Chineseness is best understood as a social construction, constantly re-negotiated within webs of power relations.

‘ ‘Chineseness’ is no longer, if it ever was, a property or essence of a person calculated by that person’s having more or fewer ‘Chinese’ values or norms, but instead can be understood only in terms of the multiplicity of ways in which ‘being Chinese’ is an inscribed relation of persons and groups to forces and processes associated with global capitalism and its modernities’ (1997: 4)

The idea of 'Chinese community' is largely constructed as a whole, already existing out there with well-defined boundaries. It inevitably excludes as non-Chinese what has not been ascribed before as Chinese and includes what fits or is made to fit with the description. This selection, however, over-generalises partial aspects of the reality while undermining processes of self-identification. This is highlighted in the case of Ildigo who feels oppressed by the singular and uniform identity of a 'Chinese community' in which she is not represented since the category is about the imagination of a group in its difference and unity, not about what makes her a Chinese person. She rightly feels that such representations are silencing her particular experience of being Chinese. Her feelings echo the diversity of social experiences, cultural identities and subjective positions too often simplified under the label 'Black' (Hall 1996). In practice, the category 'Chinese community' is constantly reshuffled and renegotiated at the individual level in their relationships with others, Chinese and non-Chinese. Ildigo, for example, creates a positive identity for herself by refashioning the ascribed image of the Chinese community. This negotiation takes place in face of the differences with her parents, of the ignorant and racists comments and of being in a profession where Chinese are underrepresented and stereotyped. In that process, the category of 'Chinese

community' is a useful point of reference onto which the individual can graft and craft his/her own meaning of being Chinese in London.

'Histories' of Chinese migration to the UK: a family story and migration waves

I have just established that the 'Chinese community' category is various and motivated. How can individuals' trajectories help us to understand the diversity it conceals? How does Ildigo also create her sense of what it means to be Chinese in relation to her own understanding of her family history? Ildigo was proud to tell me about her family story, that she actually called 'my story'. It seems that sharing it with me was a way to reconnect with her identity that she struggled to root in the image of the Chinese community. Telling her family story gave her the necessary 'prehistory' (Feuchtwang 2005) onto which she could anchor what it meant for her to be Chinese. She starts with the departure of her paternal grandfather from Mainland China. 'My grandfather as a young man was forced to emigrate in order to survive widespread starvation. He had no other choice'. He went to America on a boat but got stopped at the border as he didn't have the right papers'.⁷¹ He could not go back as 'it would be too shameful for his family'. He had the choice to go to Canada or to England, 'this place he never heard of before'. He had first planned to go to the United States but was redirected to migrate to the UK, where 'he landed in Cardiff docks'. He worked in a laundry for a few years and then managed to 'save enough money to start up his own laundry in a small town near Cardiff'. When he was doing well enough he went back to China to get an arranged marriage. Someone told him of an 'unusual girl as she could write and read'. It was the teacher's daughter. 'She was 17, he was over 30 something'. She got pregnant on the way back and their first son was born in Wales. They had two other sons after that and then a stillborn baby girl. 'My grandmother was devastated as it was the first girl of the family'. After that, 'my dad was born and then at last his sister, who was very spoiled as she was the last one of the family'. The first son became an engineer always travelling everywhere, the second one studied at SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies) in London and worked for the foreign office, and the third one became a doctor. 'My

71 See Kwong & Mišćević 2005 for a history of Chinese migration to the United States..

father didn't do as well'. He wanted to be a teacher but failed his degree in history, geography and politics. He ended up working as a civil servant, 'but it didn't go with him'. Then Ildigo starts talking about her mother, that this one 'studied nursing, but never worked as a nurse'. Then she explains that her mother is originally from Malaysia and met her father when she came to study in the UK in the 60s. 'My mother speaks several dialects including Mandarin but not my dad's dialect which is Teochiu'. Like Ildigo's father she also comes from a family of six children and she is the fourth one, coming just after the death of a girl infant. 'My mother never met her elder brother'. He was sent to China when he was little to be educated by his grandma and died of cancer when he was 40 years old. 'Her mother also died when she was young and she had to go and lived with an aunt and her cousin who she became quite closed to.' Then Ildigo's mother came to the UK and met her father.

This detailed account of Ildigo's family story is hard to match with the dominant image of the Chinese community as the takeaway family business, which has migrated from Hong Kong a few decades ago. Neither of her parents is from Hong Kong or worked in the catering business. Technically, they each came from a different wave of migration, a different place of origin or country (Malaysia/China (Chaozhou)) and a different generation of migration. However, the very same fact of their union shows that this division of migration in waves, generations or places of origin is misleading and overlooks a reality where overlaps and encounters between such distinctions are taking place while being easily forgotten in representations of the 'Chinese community'. Life narratives are a rich way to explore whom, when, where and how do individuals connect or not, and how these different interactions participate in constructing a sense of the individual and of belonging to an ethnic group. But how does Ildigo's very personal trajectory relate to more conventional renderings of the history of Chinese migrants to the UK?

The landscape of what it is like to be Chinese in the UK is mostly defined by the dominant wave of migration which took place after the Second World War, forgetting the early history of Chinese settlement in the UK, simplifying the dispersed and diverse places Chinese migrants come from, and acknowledging with difficulties new trends of migration and the particularities of individual stories in their encounter with other Chinese migrants. Typically, the Chinese community in the UK is summarised through the image of the Hong Kong worker or owner of Chinese restaurants and their families.

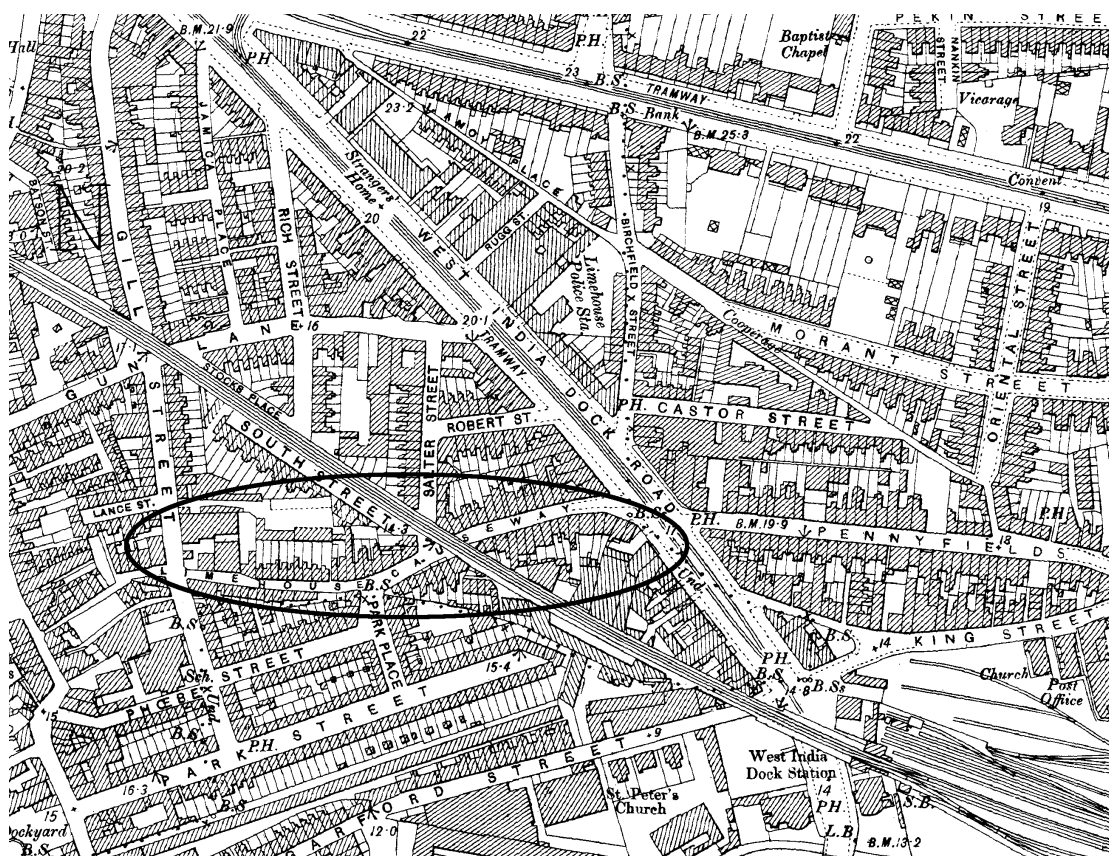
From the outside, this image is seen very positively. The Chinese are a very successful group which brings wealth to the country thanks to the fact that Chinese are hardworking and have an ‘impressive capacity for self-help’ (House of Commons: vii). By taking a look at the history of Chinese migrations to the UK, one quickly realises that the face of the Chinese community is fairly recent, mostly defined by the dominant flow of Chinese peasants from the New Territories of Hong Kong since the 1950s and that the positive appreciation of the community hides a more complex reality. The history of those migrations is usually narrated in three distinct phases: from the first Chinese man to come to Britain till WWII, and then till the 80s when new forms of migration emerge again (Benton & Gomez 2008, Baker 1994, Parker 1998). In this historical section, I focus on the two first waves of migration, and I explain the need to understand Chinese migration beyond the single destination framework.



Picture 1: Portrait of Shen Fu Tsong in visit at the court of James II in 1687.
(Source: www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/factual/chinese_in_britain1.shtml)

The first wave of migration starts with the arrival of the first Chinese individuals to the UK and extends over a few centuries till the Second World War, when Chinese migration changes significantly in nature and size. In 1687 a young Jesuit convert from Nanking called Shen Fu Tsong arrived at the court of James II and became the first recorded instance of a Chinese person in Britain (Benton & Gomez 2008: 23, Chen 30 April 2007, see picture 1).⁷² Between the 17th and 19th centuries, only lone Chinese pioneers make it to the UK (Benton & Gomez 2008: 22).

In the 18th century, the presence of Chinese seafarers working on vessels of the China trade is reported in the port areas of East London.⁷³ Although they never plan to settle, small communities gradually take shape in the seaports of London and Liverpool.⁷⁴ From the 1890s the Chinese population in the East End grows in size and spreads eastwards, from the original settlement in Limehouse Causeway, into Pennyfields.⁷⁵



Map 3: Chinatown in the East End, 1896. Limehouse and Causeway are encircled (Source: historic OS map, Edina Digimap)

⁷² The King was so taken with him that he had his portrait painted and hung in his bed chamber. The portrait was on display at the National Portrait Gallery in 2007 for an exhibition called 'Between Worlds: Voyagers to Britain 1700–1850' (Chen 30 April 2007).

⁷³ Early newspapers' reports date back from July 1782 (Parker 1998: 68).

⁷⁴ See Lin Wong (1989) for a history of the Chinese community in Liverpool.

⁷⁵ As shown by the Census figures in table 1 and 2, the growth is proportionally small.

Despite being a relatively small and slowly growing population, Chinese migrants in Britain quickly start to be viewed as a threat to British workers. This reflects an international context where indentured Chinese labourers are increasingly condemned as cheap labour taking away the jobs of white workers (Benton & Gomez 2008, Parker 1998: 70-71). Fear and misunderstanding engender strong negative perceptions of this community, which are exacerbated by the press and fictional stories of London's Chinatown as a place of evil criminality (Clegg 1994, Seed 2006). All Chinese men are perceived to be a Fu Manchu *en puissance*, a fictional character created by Sax Rohmer in 1913 who was depicted as the evil criminal par excellence in a series of short stories about London's Chinatown.⁷⁶ The Chinese are also condemned for their immoral behaviours of mingling with prostitutes, consuming opium and gambling. Such accounts reinforce the idea of a Yellow Peril which in turn fuels racist movements. In fact, there is only one sector of the labour market where the Chinese compete with the British: the merchant navy (Seed 2006: 73). What is more the Chinese are too small of a community to be a threat on the job market as shown by the census figures from 1881 to 1931 (see table 1 and 2 below). Despite the subjective limitations of the Census figures,⁷⁷ the number of Chinese migrants is still quite small in comparison to the presence of other immigrant populations at the time.

‘Compare the 1,194 Chinese aliens in Greater London in 1931, for instance, with over 25,000 Poles, nearly 18,000 Russians, 11,000 Italians, and over 9,000 French and Germans’ (Seed 2006: 64).

Because of the animosity towards them,⁷⁸ Chinese migrants in the UK, like their counterparts in the United States, have little choice but to take on the only economic opportunities left to them at the time, the only sector where they will not be in direct competition with the British, the laundry business. The first Chinese laundry in the UK

⁷⁶ Similar accounts of criminality and immorality associated with Chinese men and Chinatown could be found in novels of the time, such as Charles Dickens' *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* and Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Barker 1994, Seed 2006).

⁷⁷ Such figures can only be taken as rough estimates. One must be aware of their limitations. Criteria defining the Chinese category in the Census figures changed over the years, making it difficult to read too much in those census figures. For example, the 1881 census figures include English nationals born in China while excluding Chinese people born elsewhere (see Seed 2006 and Benton & Gomez 2008) for more details on Chinese demographics in Britain. Despite their flaws, the Census figures give an interesting point of reference, notably in comparison to other immigrant populations in the UK at the time and in comparison to later Census figures, notably after the Second World War.

⁷⁸ Recruitment limitations do not apply to the Army and nearly 100,000 Chinese are enrolled to fight the First World War on the side of Britain and France.

opens in 1901; by 1931 there are 500 of them (Jones 1979). Despite the unwelcoming atmosphere of the time and accounts of the Chinese being a closed community, Chinese relationships with the local population are more friendly and peaceful than suggested by novels and newspapers' stories (Benton & Gomez 2008, Seed 2006). As a matter of fact, as a predominantly male population, Chinese comers to the UK often take working-class British and Irish women as partners who they consequently have children with. Against the moral and racist disapproval of such unions, the women report being well treated: they do not beat them up, do not drink and take good care of the children (Benton & Gomez 2008, Lin Wong 1989, Seed 2006). By the 1950s, the 150 years presence of this first period of migration is hardly felt. Many seafarers are gone, some have been forcefully removed by the British government and shipping companies after the Second World War.⁷⁹ Also, children of those migrants during this period, under the influence of their British and Irish mothers, tend to get easily integrated in the local society and are not very exposed to Chinese culture. This makes it even harder to trace back the presence of this earlier wave of migration.

Year	National	London	Limehouse
1881	224	109	70
1891	767	302	82
1901	387	120	55
1911	1,120	247	101
1921	2,419	711	337
1931	1,934	1,194	167

Table 1: Chinese in London, 1881–1931.
(Source: Census reports cited in Seed (2006: 63))

Year	Number
1851	78
1861	147
1871	202
1881	665
1891	582
1901	387
1911	1319
1921	2419
1931	1934

Table 2: The China-born population of England and Wales, 1851-1931.
(Source: Census reports cited in Ng (1968: 6))

⁷⁹ This is a widely untold event of the history of Chinese people in Britain which was mentioned in the episode 3 of a radio programme dedicated to the Chinese community in Britain (Chen 2nd May 2007). Thousands of Chinese seamen were repatriated at the time, many of whom left behind wives and children they would never see again. Worse, the women and the children thought that they had been abandoned by their husbands and fathers and most of the time did not know what actually really happened to them.

Because the presence of these first settlements tends to weaken while new flows contrasting in type, size and reason for coming take place after the Second World War, are generally described as the beginning of a second wave of migration. This population comes mainly from British colonial posts such as Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore and are, as a result, mainly Cantonese and Hakka speaking. Later, in 1970s-80s, they are joined by the Vietnamese Chinese minority which chooses the UK as one of the destinations in which to seek asylum (Benton & Gomez 2008: 43-47).⁸⁰ The fact that they speak Cantonese and that their ancestors often come from the South East of China makes it harder to differentiate them from the bulk of other Chinese migrants. It is argued, though, that their needs as refugees are very different from the rest of the Chinese community in the UK (Benton & Gomez 2008: 43-47, House of Commons 1985: viii).

Despite the fact that they come from different places of origin, historical accounts of this migration period tends to focus on the Hong Kong Chinese and the trends of their settlement (Parker 1998: 75). In the face of difficult times at home, migration to the UK becomes a necessary avenue for peasants of rural Hong Kong in order to survive an economic dead end (Baker 1994: 294, Parker 1998: 75). As members of the Commonwealth, their migration from Hong Kong is made easy, although immigration policies toughen over time (Baker 1994: 298, Benton & Gomez 2008: 39-41). It is also in the 50s that Chinese laundries are put out of business by the introduction of the washing machine. Chinese migrants must now look for other economic opportunities. The boom in the ethnic catering trade around that time provides a new economic niche (Baxter & Raw 1988, Baker 1994, Benton & Gomez 2008: 111) while still ensuring that direct competition with the British population is avoided. The growth of this industry becomes in turn the main impetus for further Chinese migration. Restaurant owners organise for men of their lineage or from their hometown to come over and work in their restaurants in the UK (Watson 1975, 1977). This type of migration is often described as 'chain migration', and is still found to function for other groups of migrants to Europe (Pieke & Mallee 1999). Contrary to Chinese seafarers who rarely had planned to come and work in the UK in the first place, Chinese migrants of that period are actively planning to migrate to the UK using kinship and village networks to

⁸⁰ As a result of the communists taking over, the Chinese population of Vietnam was persecuted and accused of being capitalist. Many consequently fled to other countries. The UK is one of the destinations some reached (Benton & Gomez 2008: 43, Pan 1990).

achieve it. It is important to highlight though that they never planned to settle here (Watson 1975: 131) and that, as suggested by Baker (1994), the decision to migrate was not a real choice but more a necessity made by harsh economic competition in the field of agriculture in China. Given this active migration facilitated by family members or fellow villagers already in the UK, the Chinese population increases consequently (see table 3 below). From a population of 1,934 in 1931, it jumps to 12,523 in 1951.⁸¹ Similarly the number of restaurants also increases from two in 1931 to 100 in 1951 (Seed 2006, Watson 1975). In 1961, Britain's Chinese population has jumped to 38,750, with this time a fivefold increase in Hong Kong-born residents in London.

Year	China	Hong Kong	Singapore	Malaysia	Total
1951	1,763	3,459	3,255	4,046	12,523
1961	9,192	10,222	9,820	9,516	38,750
1971	13,495	29,520	27,335	25,680	96,030
1981	17,569	58,917	32,447	45,430	154,363

Table 3: The Chinese population of Great Britain, 1951-1981.

(Source: Census reports, cited in Taylor (1987: 40), figures for 1951 and 1961 cover England and Wales only).

This second wave of migration mainly characterises the Chinese community as it is seen today throughout the UK: the take-away family business. Exemplified as hard-working compared to other ethnic groups, the Chinese, because they are a successful ethnic group which participates in the country's wealth, are now seen positively (House of Commons 1985, see Chapter 4). They no longer represent the economic threat of the earlier wave of migration. This appraisal of their economic success embellishes a complex and fragmented reality. Faced with increasing competition, aspiring Chinese entrepreneurs have a few choices but to build their firms with their family members and to impose harsh working conditions and low salaries onto them (Benton & Gomez 2008). While ethnic solidarity is believed to be a key success of the Chinese community in the UK (House of Commons 1985: vii), the reality is that competition, exploitation and dispersion between them prevent any cooperation.

‘In an attempt to avoid economic competition with whites and avert a possible racist backlash, Chinese have competed among themselves to develop their businesses. (...). Intra-ethnic competition requires the community's geographic dispersal, further hindering attempts to cooperate even reactively to secure government protection against racist

⁸¹ As mentioned in footnote 77 already, the census figures need to be read with a critical eye.

pressures. While racism often unifies oppressed ethnic and religious groups, the Chinese have been prevented from uniting by economic rivalry.’ (Benton & Gomez 2008: 362)

Economic competition between themselves resulted in an exacerbation of existing ethnic and historical differences (Benton & Gomez 2008: 113, Ng 1968: 30, Shang 1984: 10). It is often forgotten that owners of the first Chinese restaurants were from earlier migration (seafarers and diplomats from Mainland China who stayed in Britain). The arrival of new Chinese migrants in the 1950s and subsequent years only meant more competition between them. Similarly, Chinese-ethnic people of other Commonwealth countries, Malaysia and Singapore, found it hard to cooperate with Hong Kongese (Ng 1968: 29). At the same time although there are few statistical figures on the Chinese’s activity in the UK, it is suggested that the catering industry is overrepresented (Benton & Gomez 2008: 113-114) in line with a worldwide tendency to stereotype the Chinese migrant as an entrepreneur of the catering industry.⁸²

Historical accounts of Chinese migration tend to be simplified through a chronological description of different waves which does not capture, I argue, the more complex reality that Idilgo’s family story illustrates. The description of migration as the displacement from one country to move to another fails to capture that Chinese migration to the UK from a very early stage is influenced and constructed by its transnational character (Benton 2003). I would argue further as previously demonstrated by Pieke (1999) and Toyota (2003) that the traditional framework of migration as the movement between two places, that of origin and destination, needs to be reconsidered to integrate the experience of Chinese transnational migrants. This effort echoes some of the concerns of ‘transnationalism’ to reconsider the movement of migrants through different places as ‘part of a single social experience’ (Basch et al. 1994: 6). To understand Chinese migration beyond the single destination framework, Chinese individuals’ life stories and journeys must be given more importance. The diversity of migration ventures told through the eye of an individual uncovers the danger of capturing them as the history of a single movement to Britain. The Chinese community in the UK is composed and recomposed by different fragments of migration coming at different times and from different places. This process is constant as I demonstrate later on.

⁸² There is notably an interesting study of Chinese migrants in France from Pairault (1995) which shows that the image of the self-employed Chinese restaurateur is not confirmed by statistics.

Therefore, in light of my research focus, it becomes essential to ask: What are the most important factors influencing the experience of Chinese migrants in London, affected by the changes brought about the 2005 Gambling Act? Put differently, What are the social and economic, regulatory and legal processes confronting the current generation of Chinese Londoners, and how does this impact upon their attitudes towards participation in various kinds of gambling and other risk taking activities?

Chinese cocklers, accountancy students and City traders

Ahmei is a woman in her late 40s from Mainland China. She comes from the city of Shenyang located in the Lianoning province at the Northeast of the country (see map 4 below). Ahmei arrived in London in 2002 on a visiting visa. Since then, the six months validity of her visa has expired. She is technically an undocumented migrant, a category more popularly known as ‘illegal migrants’.⁸³ During all this time that she has been in the UK, she has done all sorts of job in the informal economy, from waitress in one of Chinatown’s Chinese restaurants to cleaner in an office. Working in the UK is a lot of hardship, much more than what she used to do in China where she worked in an office and not such long hours. ‘Here in London, work is much tougher, but it’s worth it. You earn far more money in comparison’, she tells me, ‘This pays for the hardship’. Ahmei needed to earn a lot of money when she came here. With her husband, she had sent their only child, not yet 18 years old, to study in the UK a year earlier — in the hope of giving her a better future. ‘My daughter was still a ‘baby’ when she first came to London, she needed to be taken care of’. What is more, ‘life is expensive in this country, especially in London’. By coming and working here, Ahmei was able to support her daughter financially and pay for her university fees. Work is tough here and Chinese migrants are more vulnerable to exploitation if they do not have the appropriate papers (Pai 2008). Despite this, Ahmei feels that the amount she earns is still ‘worth the suffering’. For Ahmei, earning more money than she would normally earn in China gives her the means to change her daughter’s future. In that respect, her effort echoes other parents’ sacrifices in China who, by financing their education, are hoping their

⁸³ In order to avoid the negatively connoted term of ‘illegal immigrant’, I use in preference the terms of ‘undocumented migrant’, ‘status-less migrant’ or ‘irregular migrant’.

children will have the future they did not have, and that in return, they will be taken care of in their old age (Fong 2004).

While Ahmei comes from an area of China which is relatively new to international migration, she follows the path covered by many other Chinese migrants who have come to the UK in hope of bettering the life and future of their family. As we have just seen, her time in London is dedicated to financing a bright future for her daughter. What is noticeable is that this hope for a better future is fuelling a growing number of Mainland Chinese to come to the UK's shores. In effect, this creates an inevitable atmosphere of competition in order to grasp opportunities which, doubled with tougher legislation in relation to irregular immigrants (Pieke et al. 2004), is making the legal, social and economic situations of those migrants more and more precarious (Pai 2008). For those who are reasonably lucky, like Ahmei, they manage to enter the country legally with a visitor or student visa that they end up overstaying after the six months validity expires. For others, more desperate, they have no other option but to recourse to smugglers which inevitably puts them in a situation of debt bondage (Pai 2008, Pieke et al. 2004). The presence of irregular Chinese stowaways and visa overstayers really started to take off in the 80s and has grown considerably since, although it is difficult, or rather impossible, to get reliable statistics on their number (Benton & Gomez 2008: 53-55, Pharoah et al. 2009: 23). The highly infamous event of the Morecambe Bay tragedy brought attention to the poor working conditions of this population. On 5 February 2004, 21 Chinese cockle pickers were drowned by the incoming tide in Morecambe Bay in order to earn £5 for 25 kilos of cockles.⁸⁴

Year	China	Hong Kong	Singapore	Malaysia	Vietnam	Taiwan	Total
1991	18,573	53,473	4,858	15,153	9,448	1,634	156,938
2001	43,808	-	-	-	-	-	226,971

Table 4: The Chinese population of the UK in 1991 and 2001.
(Source: 1991 and 2001 Census)

The phenomenon of irregular migration tends to over-represent the Fujianese (Pieke et al. 2004), a particularly poor region of South-East China, just above Guangdong (see map 4 below). The presence of the Fujianese can be greatly felt in London and the rest of the UK. Of the 21 dead in the Morecambe Bay tragedy, 20 were Fujianese (Beck

⁸⁴ A film 'Ghosts' recalls this tragic incident by telling the story of those 21 Chinese cocklers.

2007: 146).⁸⁵ They represent an important majority but let us not forget that Chinese migrants also come from other countries, such as Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam or Taiwan,⁸⁶ or other regions of China, such as Anhui, Beijing, Chongqing, Guangxi, Hebei, Heilongjian, Henan, Hubei, Hunan, Inner Mongolia, Jiangsu, Liaoning, Shaanxi, Shandong, Shanxi, Sichuan, Tianjin and Zhejiang (Pharoah et al. 2009: 25). The most contrasting element of these recent migrations in comparison to previous Chinese sojourners is the ever-growing precarious nature of their economic conditions. Tougher immigration legislation, combined with greater competition, is pushing them to the margins of the labour market in the informal economy. They have become easy prey for exploitation both in the Chinese-ethnic economic enclave and outside as part of a wider multi-ethnic pool of cheap manual labour (Pai 2008).



Map 4: Map of China and its regions.
(Source: www.paulnoll.com/China/Provinces)

As much as Ahmei experiences life in Britain with the constraints of being an undocumented migrant, in contrast, her daughter enjoys better conditions of migration.

⁸⁵ One woman was from the Liaoning province (see map 4).

⁸⁶ The data Census for the years 1951 to 2001 shows that besides Hong Kong and Mainland China, Chinese migrants to the UK also come in majority from Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam and Taiwan (see tables 3 and 4).

Ahmei's daughter speaks English fluently, legally resides in the country, can get a job (her student visa allows her to work up to 20 hours a week), has recently qualified in accountancy (she had just finished her studies at the time of my research), has a bright future ahead of her (that she goes back to China, decides to work in the UK or elsewhere), and is eligible to claim a British passport if she stays in the UK long enough.⁸⁷

Ahmei's daughter as a student is another kind of newcomer to the UK. As a fee-payer she is seen more positively since she is bringing an income to the UK.⁸⁸ The migration of Chinese students to Britain started as early as the mid-19th century (Benton & Gomez 2008: 47-48), but it has become more noticeable with the constant growth of Chinese students from Mainland China since the 1980s with a steep increase at the turn of the century.⁸⁹ From 2,883 of them in 1997, the Chinese student population in the UK has jumped to 47,740 in 2005 (Wei 2005: 431). Most of them are self-funded and this population consists, in part but not only, of children of wealthy or middle-classes families which have benefited from the economic development in China. As the case of Ahmei and her daughter shows, Chinese people of modest income also send their children to study abroad even if that means spending their life savings and investing all their time and revenue in the support of this opportunity.⁹⁰ Some others, young professionals in China, fund themselves to come and study a Masters degree in the UK with their savings of a few years' salary.⁹¹ Although they are not as numerous as self-funded students, some students are also sponsored by the state (Liu 2005: 294), local scholarship (Li 2002), or also, more rarely, by private companies.⁹² The growing numbers of Chinese students going to study abroad means that they are more and more disparate than they used to be (Li 2002: 177).

87 As a student she qualifies for Indefinite Leave to Remain after 10 years of residency in the UK and a year after obtaining Indefinite Leave to Remain she can apply for full British citizenship.

88 Of course, it could be argued that those working in the informal economy are also contributing to the UK, but the point is that they are not perceived to make such contribution.

89 Chinese students often come from a vast diversity of countries of origin which is difficult to account in statistics.

90 Ahmei and her daughter were sharing a flat with another Chinese mother and her son. Similarly to Ahmei, the other Chinese mother was working and financially taking care of her son while he was studying accountancy.

91 I met during my fieldwork three students who had come under such circumstances. Lewis who I mention below, is one of them.

92 A friend of mine from Guangzhou was funded by her company to study a PhD in Law at SOAS.

Lewis, who came to study an MBA in Oxford after five years working in Shanghai and who is now working as a trader in the city, was eager to explain the differences between Chinese students, starting with the example of his girlfriend and himself. His girlfriend Miriam, whom he met in London during a Poker night between friends, also studied in the UK. She now works in finance but not as a trader. She has been in the UK far longer than Lewis has. When she was 16, her parents sent her to a Scottish boarding school.⁹³ She passed her A-levels in this country and also her degree. She has been here for over 10 years now and she is quite happy to stay in the UK. Her boyfriend, on the contrary, would like to go back and raise his children in China once he has achieved a good few years of working experience. Lewis explains that there are many things about China that Miriam does not understand or conversations they cannot have since she has missed out on what was going on in China in those past 10 years. Miriam herself expresses that she feels uneasy when she goes back since she is perceived as an outsider to her own culture.

As a by-product of this increasing migration of Chinese students abroad, which has become the most important international student population in the world, with 460,000 of them in 103 countries in 2002 (Wei 2005: 430), inevitably follows the emergence of a more qualified group of Chinese migrants. As a matter of fact, 'the very facts that mainland Chinese have consistently ranked number one among the overall foreign student population in most Western countries and that most of them study practical subjects (such as computer science and electrical engineering) make them employable, thus the obvious beneficiaries of the policies aimed at recruiting and retaining people with portable skills' (Liu 2005: 298). In contrast to legislation targeting illegal immigration, legislation of legal and skilled migration has become more liberalised in the UK since 2000 (Pieke et al. 2004: 11) which makes it easier for graduates to find a job or set up a business after their studies and for Chinese businessmen to look for business opportunities in the UK (Liu 2005, Pieke 2007). Nevertheless, there is no clear division between Chinese students and professionals and many professionals working in the UK have often been students here before or somewhere else in the world.⁹⁴ Ahmei's

93 As highlighted by Li (2002: 177) about Chinese students in the Netherlands, it is not uncommon for some families to send their children to study to a secondary school or even a primary school abroad. This is motivated by the fact that the earlier they learn a foreign language the better they will master it.

94 I notably met Chinese professionals from Mainland China who had previously studied in New Zealand, Australia or America.

daughter, as a recent qualified accountant, is precisely at this moment of transition of her life in the UK.

My ethnographic data shows that London is particularly attracting ambitious Chinese graduates in finance and related field of expertise such as accountancy, mathematics, business law, media, marketing or computer science for a career in the City. An examination of this group shows that alternatives to the passive stereotype that Ildigo finds so restrictive and insulting are gradually emerging from the changing socioeconomic conditions stimulating migration from China. During my fieldwork, I notably came across a network of young professionals working in finance, called 丝路 *Silu*, 'silk road'. As explained to me by one of the members running the association, the metaphor of the 'silk road' illustrates for them a cultural exchange taking place beyond trading. In reality, 丝路 *Silu* is more a way to promote and affirm the success of young Chinese professionals in London.

'We're not just a bunch of people who are doing banks, working in consultancy really high profile but we want to open the window for local people to see what Chinese young professionals achieve.'

What is striking about this network is not only that they regroup mainly young professionals working in banks, accounting firms, law firms, consultancy firms, based in London,⁹⁵ but it is the rapidity with which it has been formed, gathering over 1,000 members in just over a year. The organisation started in January 2007. Four people had the idea to start it for the purpose of socialising and providing a networking platform. A few events were organised. The first dinner 6 people came, the second time 80 people turned up. At each event new people came along. The growth of the group was also grounded in the creation of a Google group 'Chax' by one founding member. 'Chax' first started as a practical way to exchange emails between friends who really loved to play badminton. At the beginning there were only 25 people. In less than a year, there were 800 members who had signed up to it. This initiative is not isolated. Another networking group of Chinese people working in finance called The Association of Chinese Financial Professionals in the UK, the ACfPU,⁹⁶ was an idea which started in 2006 on similar grounds with a group of friends in investment banking who graduated

95 Some (a minority) are also from Nottingham, Manchester, Birmingham.

96 Ibid. footnote 31, Chapter 1.

from leading institutions in Europe and the US. Those young Chinese professionals are also using existing networks, such as Dimsum a website for the Chinese community in the UK set up by a British Born Chinese girl originally working in marketing. Although young Chinese professionals are increasingly from Mainland China, some are also British or Born Chinese in other countries.⁹⁷ Chinese people who are born and/or have grown up in the West and in Southeast Asian countries and are from the same generation of those young Chinese professionals from Mainland China often find themselves working in similar sectors and have a similar interest to promote a positive image of their Chineseness.

The arrival of new Chinese flavours is symptomatic of the heterogeneity of Chinese newcomers to London but also of the increasing consuming power of young Chinese professionals and their demands for more atmospheric and trendy looking restaurants. Dimsum, the website of the Chinese community in the UK, is popular for its articles on food and restaurants in London where heated debates on the topic often occur. The page about the 10 best Chinese restaurants in London is the most frequently visited.⁹⁸ It is striking to see, that in the last year or so, articles on the food page have now moved from questions about where and how to eat dimsum to the welcoming of more diverse and of better quality Chinese food in London, such as show articles' titles: 'On the contentious arrival of chic Chinese food in London'⁹⁹ and 'On the arrival of Sichuan'¹⁰⁰ food in London'.¹⁰¹ It is also noticeable that, 包子 *bao zi*, a steamed filled bun which is typically eaten in the North of China, can now easily be found as snacks on the go in the streets of Chinatown (see picture 2 below). 包子 *Bao zi* are also available in a fairly recent restaurant dedicated to Northern and Sichuanese Chinese food, called Bao zi Inn. The style of this restaurant is symptomatic of the changes in Chinese migration to the

97 For example, Kevin is British Born Chinese, his parents came to the UK from the New territories and he works as an accountant in a bank. Ildigo's faraway cousin from the United States is originally from Panama and came to London to work in the City. Teddy is Chinese Vietnamese and migrated to the United States with his family when he was very young. He grew up there and later he came to work as a marketing manager in London where he met his Taiwanese wife who grew up in the UK and works as a GP for the NHS.

98 'Top 10 London Dim Sum restaurants 2008', *Dimsum*, 16 July 2008; www.dimsum.co.uk/food/top-london-dim-sum-restaurants-2008.html; 'Top 10 Dim Sum restaurants in London', *Dimsum*, 10 December 2006; www.dimsum.co.uk/food/top-10-dimsum-restaurants-in-london.html.

99 The full article can be found at www.dimsum.co.uk/food/designer-dim-sum-chic-chinese-in-chinatown.html.

100 Sichuan is a Western region of China (see map 4).

101 The full article can be found at www.dimsum.co.uk/food/sichuan-invasion.html. The arrival of Sichuanese food in London had already started in 2006, see the article 'Sichuan invasion!' at www.dimsum.co.uk/food/sichuan-invasion.html.

UK. The food served and the decoration are in sharp contrast with more traditional Chinese restaurants and takeaways in the UK. The food is a real change with the standard menu that one can find in a Cantonese-style restaurant, no dimsum but delicious Sichuanese and Northern style hand-made noodles and buns (see picture 3). The visual identity of the Bao Zi Inn (see picture 4) is equally breaking away from the more traditional Chinese restaurant we are used to. The whole restaurant is vividly decorated with paraphernalia from communist China: Mao portraits, Chinese military outfit, Chinese communist propaganda posters, newspaper cuttings from the Cultural Revolution. Similarly, a few months later, a Taiwanese restaurant, Leong's, also appeared in Chinatown (see picture 5).¹⁰²



Picture 2: 包子 *Bao zi* street stall in London's Chinatown.

¹⁰² See the *Timeout* article 'Taiwanese food debut in Chinatown' at www.timeout.com/london/restaurants/reviews/13381.html.



Picture 3: Hand-made noodles

(Source: www.worldfoodieguide.com/index.php/baozi-inn-chinese-reviewlondonengland)



Picture 4: Bao Zi Inn Inside (Source: eatlikeagirl.com/2009/01/28/baozi-inn-chinatownlondon)



Picture 5: Leong's, Taiwanese restaurant in Chinatown.

This important growing number of young Chinese professionals in financial services and the provision of restaurants and other services directly for them feel at first that history is repeating itself and that there is a line of continuity with the transitions described by Benton and Gomez about the economic activity of Chinese migrants in the UK: 'from salt to soap' (from sailing to laundry) and 'soap to soy' (from laundry to takeaway) (Benton and Gomez 2008: 363), now going from 'soy to shares', that is to say from takeaway to finance. However, in parallel with the boom in this sector of activity for young Chinese professionals, those with no legal status and/or no such qualifications are experiencing on the contrary further worsening of their already precarious social and economic conditions. For them, work is no longer attached to a particular sector, as it still was with catering some years ago. They are forced to do all sorts of job, those with the lowest pay.¹⁰³ The situation of Chinese migrants in the UK has become more unequal than it has ever been, with some being right at the top of the social ladder and others at the very bottom.

¹⁰³ Some examples of the jobs that Chinese irregular workers are doing in the UK apart from catering are: DVD sellers, cockle pickers, day workers for a food-processing factory, seasonal agricultural workers, domestic workers, sex workers, massage parlour housekeepers or telecommunications factory workers (Pai 2008).

‘[F]or many countries, China (plus Taiwan, Hong Kong and the Chinese in Southeast Asia) is the largest source of desirable fee-paying foreign students and highly-skilled or business migrants, but also of the most prominent flows of undesirable immigrants who enter the country in the back of a lorry and may end up dead, caught by the incoming tide at Morecambe Bay. ‘ (Pieke 2007: 82)

Beyond sub-divisions

Current Chinese migrations to the UK reflect the worldwide changes in Chinese migration trends and their steady intensification from the 1980s,¹⁰⁴ to the point that it can be said we have entered ‘a new Chinese migration order’ (Pieke 2007).¹⁰⁵ These changes correspond with China’s opening after the 1978 reforms¹⁰⁶ and following economic and social developments in Chinese society (2007). Chinese people have always migrated, but ‘[the] relatively ordered pattern of Chinese migration, with reasonably well-defined flows and areas of origin and destination, [has] changed fundamentally (...)’ (2007: 84). Although Chinese migration has always been of heterogeneous nature (Pieke 1999), this diversification has now taken an unprecedented trend (Pieke 2007), with the proliferation of migration types, in terms of legality and ways of migrating, age, gender, socio-economic background or qualification, but also of origins and destinations (Liu 2005). Chinese migrants after the mid-80s are consequently commonly referred to as ‘new migrants’ as opposed to the already established ‘Chinese community’ now called the ‘old migrants’ (Beck 2007, Benton & Gomez 2008: 57-61, Nyíri 2005). This division also illustrates the fact that new trends of Chinese migration are shaking up the image of model minority acquired by the established ‘Chinese community’. As explained to me by the staff of a Chinese community centre, the established migrants are unhappy with the arrival of those

104 It is important to note that there is no consensus on the total number of new migrants. Although it is believed to be growing, the number of new migrants is relatively small compared to China’s population and the overall number of global migration (less than 2%) (Liu 2005: 295). In addition, ‘the rapid increase of international migration is by no means a phenomenon unique to China’ (2005: 296).

105 Pieke (2007) interestingly argues that those changes were prefigured by earlier flows of migration in the late 1950s and 1960s from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Southeast Asia.

106 it is argued rightly by Pieke that ‘[i]t would be historically naïve to think that the Chinese (or any other people for that matter) suddenly started to migrate with the arrival of Western ‘capitalist’ modernity in 1978’ (1999: 1). As Lary shows (1999), during the communist years before the economic reform internal migration was already very active.

newcomers from Mainland China who are downplaying the positive image they gained. Their disapproval is mainly directed at the influx of status-less migrants, asylum seekers and refugees¹⁰⁷ whose presence has been portrayed negatively and made widely visible in the press. Similarly, students (Li 2002: 181) and qualified migrants do not necessarily want to be associated with the existing Chinese community that they perceive to be boorish and not Chinese enough (Nyíri 2005: 162). The separation of the 'new migrant' in opposition to the 'old migrant' is re-appropriated in discourses of Chinese patriotism to emphasise the modernity of Mainland China (2005: 162). The focus on the 'newness' of the new migrants as opposed to the old migrants overlooks that the question of being Chinese is at the centre of a fight over economic and political power, not only between Chinese themselves but also between Chinese and non-Chinese.

Individuals use sub-categories of 'new' and 'old' to emphasise their difference and similarities with other Chinese individuals, and ultimately to claim the legitimacy of their Chinese identity over other forms of Chineseness. However, in practice, individuals rarely fit into sub-categories of Chineseness. Mr Long I met in the East London Chinese community centre is a good example of this. He is from Guangzhou, speaks Cantonese and can, as such, easily be thought to be one of those 'old migrants' since most members of the centre came 30, 40 or 50 years ago. This man, however, had just arrived a few years earlier to the UK, brought by his son to retire close to his family. Although his age and the fact that he speaks Cantonese fit the criteria of the old migration, he is in fact a newcomer and has never worked in the UK before. Wang (2004b) is right to ask how new are those new migrants, to which I add with another question: how much longer will they be new before they get dethroned by newer ones? The historical account drawn earlier reminded us that what is now known as the old migration was once in the position of the new one. When the influx of Chinese migration from the ex-British colonies of Hong Kong, Malaysia or Singapore reaches the UK in the 50s and after, there was indeed an already settled Chinese community. Those now known as the 'old migrants' were at the time the new arrivals and had to negotiate their place with those already present (Benton & Gomez 2008, Ng 1968). This distinction between new and old migrants tends to ignore that the stable face of the

107 Pieke et al. (2004) demonstrate that the binary legal/illegal migration is reductive of a complicated and politically contentious reality in Europe.

established 'Chinese community' is still marked by the history of its differences and fragmentation.

It is more relevant to see that individuals do not fit nicely into sub-categories of Chineseness but constantly fluctuate in between them. This means that within the Chinese community there was an ongoing renegotiation of these borders which is not always visible to the outsider. It took me several visits to the elderly luncheon club at the Hackney Chinese community centre to realise that there was a division of tables depending on where people were from and how much each individual could fit within the already established small groups formed around each round table. Interactions beyond those tables were minimal, non-existent in some cases. The first noticeable division was between those who could speak Hakka and those who could not, which also resulted in a tendency to create a division between non-gamblers and gamblers, who played a Hakka card game. Beyond this gathering in small groups, there were also more isolated characters. John, an old Chinese man from Singapore, inevitably came across as an outsider. He does not socialise much with the rest of the members, apart from a small group from Singapore which only comes for food. He explains that there is no point talking to the rest of them since they do not understand his jokes. Actually, he had always been an outcast to his own community since he did not speak any Cantonese when he arrived in London. His family was originally from Fujian so, at home, they spoke Fujianese. Later on, he became an orphan and he was brought up in an English-speaking Catholic school. He now considers English to be his first language. In the UK, he was rejected and looked down by other Chinese for not being able to speak Cantonese, while for the outside world he was considered a full member of the Chinese community and was expected, as such, to mix with them. Although contrary to most of the other members John speaks very good English he had to learn Cantonese in order to communicate with the rest of his community. His case is not an exception. It is important to understand that Cantonese has been playing the role of *lingua franca* for a long time within Chinese communities overseas.¹⁰⁸

In contrast to other research about Chinese migrant populations which attempt to represent the diversity of Chinese migrants by dividing them into sub-categories, my ethnographic data calls for a more flexible approach which instead acknowledges the

¹⁰⁸ Currently, the most widely spoken language among Chinese migrants in London is Mandarin (Pharoah et al. 2009: 27)

role of individuals in the process of identity-making. The danger with sub-categories is that the assumption of a core identity is displaced from one level to another. In Zanzibar, Hsu (2007) discusses three distinct Chinese communities: ‘government-sent teams’, ‘Chinese business people who come and go’ and ‘the community of overseas Chinese’; in the Silicon Valley, Wong (2006) argues that sub-ethnic divisions based on regional differences are becoming more prominent; in New Zealand, Chui (2003) separates Chinese migrants in two distinct groups: Hong Kongese and Mainland Chinese; commenting on the increased numbers of new Chinese migrants worldwide, Liu (2005) divides them up into four categories: ‘students-turned-migrants’, ‘emigrating professionals’, ‘chain migration’ and ‘illegal immigrants’. In the UK, Beck makes a similarly framed representation by stressing the need to consider ‘sub-ethnicity rather than simply ethnicity’ (2007: 150) and examines the division between Cantonese Chinese as ‘old-timers’ and Fujianese Chinese as ‘newcomers’. A recent and short policy-directed research report called *The Changing Chinese Community in London: New Migration, New Needs* (Lam et al. 2009) is also adopting a similar discourse where new and old, Fujianese and Cantonese are being separated in two distinct groups.¹⁰⁹ In this re-ordering of the Chinese population in the UK, in which category would Zhang go? Zhang is an old Chinese woman originally from Yunnan.¹¹⁰ Not only coming from an unusual region of emigration, Zhang’s life story does not resemble any other Chinese migrant. Zhang is Muslim and married to a half-Chinese, half-Pakistani dentist who she moved to Pakistan with. She lived in Pakistan most of her life where she brought up two daughters and survived as much as she could after her husband married a second wife. One of her daughters is a GP in the States and is married to a Pakistani, her other daughter has failed her medicine studies, and instead runs a clothing business in London. She is married to a half-Chinese, half-Pakistani man. Zhang lives with the couple and their children in their East London house. Although she can speak *Kunminghua*¹¹¹ with her, the daughter considers herself Pakistani and mainly socialise with Pakistanis. Zhang has tried to socialise with her local Chinese community centre

109 Published in 2008, this report is the result of a two-year research project funded by the Big Lottery Fund and carried out jointly by the Chinese in Britain Forum and Middlesex University. The aims of the project were to examine recent Chinese migration to London and to provide information about the needs of the changing Chinese community. Also, see the twin report by Sales et al. (2009), *London’s Chinatown: Diaspora, Identity and Belonging*.

110 Yunnan is a region in the Southwest of China bordering with Vietnam, Thailand and Myanmar (see map 4).

111 Chinese dialect spoken in Yunnan, whose name is derived from the Yunnan capital, Kunming.

but nobody wants to play mahjong with her. One of the main problems is that she does not speak Cantonese. It is also likely that Zhang's peculiar background makes it difficult for other Chinese to relate to her. When she discovered I could speak Mandarin, she started contacting me with all sort of queries, and on one occasion she even tried to match me with one of her cousin's sons from Kunming.¹¹² As with Mr Long, John, Zhang does not easily fit in a defined sub-group. Nevertheless, group features and categorisation are necessary points of anchorage for individuals to negotiate their identity.

My ethnography evidently shows that categories are constantly blurred by individual cases which never completely belong to one sub-group or another. 'Self-perception of identity (...) is a product of ongoing social networking' (Toyota 2003: 309) or the absence of it. Categories are employed and occupied for various ends. Identification with one category or another may be strategic or unthinking but it is always 'under consideration'. Individuals never fully occupy one category, even if they might say they do. This is also noticeable for members of the same family, as demonstrated by the case of Ahmei and her daughter whose sense of being Chinese in the UK are being shaped by different factors. Both of them are at an interesting junction between two worlds which apparently live in parallel. Their case powerfully shows that the sub-division of Chinese migration in qualified/non-qualified and legal/illegal would cancel out meaningful connections, such as the relationship between a mother and a daughter. Similar blurring of divisions can be noticed in the formation of couples, as it was noted earlier with the case of Ildigo's parents and as I observed regularly in the course of my fieldwork,¹¹³ or friendship as it often happens between those working in the same sector or together and speaking the same language. Interestingly, my interaction with Chinese people in London also challenged the distinction between Chinese and non-Chinese.¹¹⁴ Ildigo, for example, would proudly introduce me to other Chinese people as being able to speak Mandarin, a language that she could not speak herself. Because I was spending

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ For example, I met a girl from Mainland China who worked as a graphic designer for a Chinese newspaper in Chinatown (she explained that she did not earn enough money from this job but she enjoyed it) and had a BBC boyfriend for whom she decided to stay in the UK after her studies. Another time at a networking party I met a Chinese Malaysian lawyer who had recently married a Mainland Chinese woman.

¹¹⁴ This is not exclusive to my position of researcher and also concerns other non-Chinese individuals with a particular interest for China or the Chinese language such as the Dimsum team since it was also composed of non-Chinese.

all my time with Chinese people when I was doing fieldwork among Chinese Vietnamese in Ho Chi Minh City, people often believed that one of my parents might be Chinese and that I was actually mixed race (Loussouarn 2001).¹¹⁵

This blurring between Chinese and non-Chinese is also noticeable in the case of Sam who reconnected with his Chinese side after years of leaving it behind. Like Ildigo, Sam is an actor, but contrary to her, being Chinese has not been too problematic. He feels British first and foremost. Sam is mixed race: his dad is English and his mother is an American Born Chinese, so-called ABC. Sam grew up in Wales where there were no other Chinese. It was not until later in life, when he decided to become an actor that Sam really started to socialise with other Chinese. Like Ildigo, Sam complains of the fact that being Chinese is an obstacle to being fully understood as a competent actor. But Sam does not feel quite comfortable with the projection of Chineseness onto him, not because people misunderstand what it is like to be Chinese but because he does not feel as Chinese as people might believe he is. He believes that as an actor you inevitably become a spokesperson for what you represent. However, he does not feel it is his place to do so since he feels only vaguely related to this community he would be representing. Because of his mixed looks, Sam does not feel the need to be understood as a Chinese person as Ildigo does. For Sam, it is mainly an aspect he cannot ignore in relation to work and that he makes the best use of for his acting career.

In this chapter, I have introduced the idea that there are inequalities as to who can actually access the different opportunities to construct a positive identity for oneself as a Chinese person. More and more Chinese enjoy favourable economic positions, and in that context they have more choices to construct themselves as Chinese and as an individual. For example, British Born Chinese, who have experienced racism and difficulties to achieve a career or who just want to enjoy more opportunities tend now to move to Hong Kong or Mainland China as a way of achieving more than in the UK. Two interesting articles written by BBCs themselves talk about the popularity of this ‘reverse migration’ among BBCs.¹¹⁶ Although the diversity and heterogeneity of

115 It is to be noted that I have dark eyes and hair.

116 See Wong, Ping-ping. 2008. ‘Full circle’, *Dimsum*, 26 October; www.dimsum.co.uk/viewpoints/full-circle.html; Cheung, Susan S. 2009. ‘Reverse migration’, *Dimsum*, 11 February; www.dimsum.co.uk/features/reverse-migration.html. Both articles are

migration opens up new opportunities to be Chinese on one side, what successful stories tend to forget to say is that the opportunity to move up the social ladder is not actually open to everyone, as I will show in Chapters 4 and 6.

Conclusion

Exclusiveness and cultural persistence are often associated with Chinese people in Britain and implicitly, there is still an assumption that ‘for a non-Chinese anthropologist it would almost certainly be virtually impossible to enter [Chinese] places, for they are open to Chinese only’ (Ng 1968: x). In this thesis, I challenge this image of cultural exclusivity, not so much because I am not Chinese but because it tends to overlook how individuals construct themselves as Chinese persons.

When talking about ‘Chinese community’ more importance needs to be given to the way individuals shape and negotiate what it means for them to belong to a Chinese community. Chinese culture and identity tend to be represented from a group’s perspective and this overlooks the relevance of individual experiences and the role of the individual in shaping his/her belonging to a group. This argument has been made by Mines (1988) about Indian culture. He argued that social scientists’ representation of Indian society tended to deny Indian persons the right to represent themselves creating

followed by interesting forum discussions. See below the four cases of BBCs who moved to Hong Kong as described in the article ‘Reverse migration’: Three moved to Hong Kong in the mid-1990s and one more recently. Their occupations range from homemaker to working in the corporate, financial or legal sectors. Their ages are mid-20s to mid-30s

Pamela grew up in a small town in southern England where there were few Chinese families. Her upbringing was typical of many BBCs – her parents owned a takeaway and all the children helped out so no hanging out or going out with her peers. She felt different at school as one of only a few Chinese children there, but did not experience any real racism.

Natalie was born in Hong Kong and moved to San Francisco (the most diverse place she has been to) when she was four years old. She lived in Staffordshire and various parts of Britain from age 12. The first time she felt real racism was as the only non Caucasian at her school in Staffordshire.

Sam grew up in new town outside of London where his father owned a restaurant and a takeaway, and a decent sized Chinese community grew from the 1960s. It was a working class town where he admits many of the locals were pretty racist. He went to the local comprehensive school, worked at the shop and stayed out of trouble.

Stephen was born in Hong Kong and moved to Scotland at a very young age so he had no recollections of Hong Kong. His parents owned a takeaway and he helped out from a young age. His parents were too busy working for the family to spend time with the Chinese community. While he considered himself as Chinese, his friends thought of him as Scottish – he sounded Scottish, ate fish ‘n’ chips, watched Monty Python and never referred to Hong Kong.

an ideal type of Indian person attributed with timeless and passive characteristics and forever trapped within the unchangeable frame of the collective whole model.

More recently, Yan in his monography of a village in Northeast China (2003) challenges the academic tendency to understand Chinese culture through the perspective of the Chinese family as the basic unit of analysis. For this purpose, he focuses on the role and experiences of individuals within the family which have been underestimated in favour of the corporate model. This way he is able to demonstrate that, ironically, socialism, in its opposition to the traditional patriarchal model of the family, has encouraged the development of individualism, and as such of new forms of agency. By his methodology that he qualifies as 'individual-centred ethnography' (2003: 10), Yan opens the way to understand Chinese culture beyond the spyglass of collective characteristics, which is formalised at a later date in his theory of individualisation in China (see Chapter 1). The example set by Yan has, I believe, deeper implications not only for the anthropology of China but for the anthropology of Chinese people elsewhere. Like the Chinese family in China, the concept of Chinese community is overrepresented in both academic and popular discourses creating a similar unbalance and also requiring an 'individual-centred' approach. In the context of my fieldwork among Chinese gamblers it quickly became evident that the actual social connections between Chinese individuals was of a more flexible, loose and fragmented nature than the one portrayed in the conception of social formations as given totalities. My fieldwork was constantly reminding me that there was no such social entity to grasp, or only in imagination, while the force of an imagined Chinese community was constantly present, taking a different shape through each person's narrative.

Although this chapter focuses on the 'Chinese' side of this thesis, it is implicitly constructed in its relation to the topic of gambling to satisfy the theoretical ambition of constructing an approach that gives equal importance to the notions of both group and individual. This ambition comes from two contrasting observations. On the one hand, there is an academic tendency to construct the individual gambler independently from his/her social connections, that is to say independent of kinship, friendship, working relationships, etc. On the other hand, as I have demonstrated in this chapter, the portrayal of a Chinese identity is strongly believed to be determined by its group's features. In the thesis, I try to create a balance between those two poles by stressing the

role of individual agency which is largely overlooked in the study of Chinese communities abroad, while underlining the need to think about social connections beyond the paradigm of community. My ethnography shows that it is more pertinent to consider the social connections which are making a Chinese person and linking her to others, including those created or severed by exchanges of various kinds. Focusing on gambling and other risk taking activities makes those important distinctions particularly clear.

Chapter 3

Gamblers' rhythms

In casinos all over the world, including in London, the odds of gambling are stacked in favour of the house. More precisely, the house edge guarantees profits over the long term, if gamblers play according to the rules.¹¹⁷ For customers, therefore, the more they gamble, the more they lose. The fact that gamblers engage in gambling, despite it being such an inefficient means to win money, is often cast as 'irrational': the failure to behave as a competent and rational economic actor. The following paragraph extracted from an article written by cognitive psychologists is a good illustration of this discourse.

'The majority of individuals behave and think irrationally when gambling. The fundamental mistake is to rely on previous events to predict the game's outcome. Gamblers tend to create illusory links between independent events (Ladouceur & Walker, 1996, 1998). While gambling, individuals forget or deny that randomness is the only determinant of the outcome. To believe in deterministic rules to explain randomness could create erroneous perceptions and an illusion of control over the game's overall outcome.'
(Benhsain, Taillefer & Ladouceur 2004: 399)

According to this argument: if people gamble to make money but cannot make money over the long run, then people who gamble are irrational. But people *do* gamble. How are we to explain this? Are all gamblers irrational? Or is it possible that this argument needs more thought? What are the assumptions made in this argument? And how might studies of gamblers and particular gambling environments help us to resolve this impasse?

It is more useful, I argue, to see that the description of gambling as irrational makes use of the conventional distinction between work and leisure, production and consumption

¹¹⁷ See Appendix A detailing percentage margins in favour of the house. It is to be noted that the house edge does not apply to 'equal chance gaming', which (a) 'does not involve playing or staking against a bank' and (b) where 'the chances are equally favourable to all participants' (Gambling Act 2005, section 8 (1)). This means that casinos which offer games of equal chance, such as poker, do not have a percentage advantage. However, casinos do operate a service charge for the use of poker rooms. Under the Gambling Act 1968, casinos were not allowed to make profit out of poker rooms but only to cover the cost of running them. In this instance, the service charge operated through a table rental per hour. With the Gambling Act 2005, casinos can now take a percentage on poker hands, which is called the 'rake'. The situation is different for mahjong tables since in this case no table rental or 'rake' is applied. Instead the service of mahjong tables in a casino is provided to attract Chinese customers.

prevalent in European and North American countries. In those contexts, gambling has been relabelled through legislative changes as a leisure activity (Kingma 2004, Matilainen 2009, Miers 2004). In order to get out of this calculative rational model, I provide in this chapter an ethnographic description and analysis of the fresh methodological perspective on gambling I advocated in Chapter 1. For this purpose I propose to revisit the meaning of gambling for Chinese casino players in London in light of a critical reading of time in gambling as a necessary linear progression towards an end point, winning. This leads me to challenge general assumptions that the notion of time is a unitary, objective and transparent entity external to human activity. I argue, on the contrary, that time is experienced and made through bodily actions in a multitude of uneven ways which vary between spaces and persons. In order to illustrate this point, I demonstrate how meaning is created or denied through the constant succession of winning and losing times engendered by gamblers' actions in the casino and through unequal access to capital of various kinds, and the distinctive life rhythms this creates outside the casino.

First, I look at the way gamblers experience the activity of gambling in the unfolding of their actions as a unique rhythm. In particular I describe in attention to detail the actions of Ahmei when she is playing electronic roulette machine at the casino. This ethnographic description demonstrates that the verdict of winning or losing is missing the point that the experience of gambling becomes meaningful as it is realised through the gambler's actions. Inevitably, the enjoyment of this rhythm means that reaching an end is not desired but continuously postponed. I then 'zoom out' from the temporality of the casino to look at another one, that of boredom, and I relate this feeling of being 'trapped' in time to particular gamblers lives outside the casino extending my argument that gambling is also the temporal rhythms gamblers create.

Beyond the narrative of a rational time

Gambling in the UK is categorised and regularized as a leisure activity. Tessa Jowell, then culture secretary referred explicitly to this reclassification of gambling when she unveiled the Gambling Bill in 2003:

‘Attitudes to gambling have changed... It is now a diverse, vibrant and innovative industry and a popular leisure activity enjoyed in many forms by millions of people. The law needs to reflect that.’¹¹⁸

Gambling is described as a non-productive activity belonging to the sphere of consumption. Here I want to show that the divisions between work and leisure/play, production and consumption are constructed as part of the narrative of a single, progressive and linear time. Within this framework, gambling is inevitably portrayed as irrational since it fails to unfold progressively towards an end point, winning. This focus on achievement means that gamblers’ expression of agency is not fully taken into account. However, I argue that we need to give more attention to what they actually do when they are gambling instead on focusing on the end result only. In other words, it is important to reconsider what is rationality¹¹⁹ and how time unfolds while gambling in order to better account for behaviour in terms that gamblers would recognise.

Explanations of gambling behaviours in the social sciences tend to portray individual engagement with gambling in opposition to a more normative or oppressive everyday life where time is subjected to the logic of modern money. Among other factors,¹²⁰ psychological studies argue that a cause of problem gambling resides in gamblers’ irrational objective to win money and that this cognitive dysfunction needs to be corrected in treatment (see Raylu & Oei 2002: 1031-1035 for a full literature review about pathological gambling). Counterbalancing the image of gambling in the West as antisocial and individualistic, sociological and anthropological studies have shown that gambling is actually driven by its own rationality against a world dominated by money accumulation and productivity, that of social motivations and rewards (Goffman 1967, Papataxiarchis 1999, Stewart 1994, Tremon 2005) and of simply having ‘fun’ (Neal 1998, 2005). Reith (2002), drawing from Caillois (1967 [1958]) and Huizinga’s (1970 [1938]) separation of gaming activities from the real world, sees gambling to be a willful escape from the routine of life with its own boundaries of time and space. Their view fits in with the division of productive and non-productive time where gambling makes

118 Department for Culture, Media and Sport: ‘New Rules Would Ensure Children And Gambling Don’t Mix, Says Jowell’, Press Release, 19 November 2003, 132/03.

119 I follow Guyer’s (2000) call to rethink rationality in human diversity beyond the universal economic paradigm.

120 Other recognised factors are: family factors, social learning and the role of genetics; sociological factors; personality traits (impulsivity, sensation-seeking, other related traits, personality disorders); biological/biochemistry (hemispheric dysregulation, neurotransmitter systems, increased arousal/stimulation); psychological states (Raylu & Oei 2002).

sense as an island of freedom and decision-making within a life constrained by the demands of work (Burns 1973). This division is often taken for granted when in practice the distinctions are blurred. As Benjamin (2006 [1930]) argues, factory work and gambling are not as different as they seem: they are based on the same constant repetition of similar actions. Conversely, work can be more than just a means of making money or constraining one's freedom; it is also a positive means of constructing personhood (Harris 2007, Menger 2009).¹²¹

What I want to show is that the development of economic rationality as a universal model (Pearson 2000) rests on the narrative of the social and geographical diffusion of modern time centred on the technological advancement of time-discipline. Thrift and Glennie (1996, 2009) have brilliantly shown that our conceptualisation of time is constructed on the idea of a single, uniform, linear and progressive temporal frame rooted in clock time. They argue that the important foundations laid by Thompson (1967) have been incorrectly generalised from a 'too narrow and too contextually specific' notion of time-discipline (2009: 47). In opposition to this uniform and simplified account of time, they describe in great detail the multiple practices of clock time which unevenly came about through history and in different places 'as a result of the needs of *particular* networks of practice to be able to measure their own and others practices simultaneously' (2009: 96, original emphasis). Beyond an academic discussion on the complex historical aspects of time-discipline, which is outside the scope of this thesis,¹²² I am interested here in the pervasiveness of the narrative of rational time in our daily lives and in relation to gambling. Like Ricoeur (1980), I posit that every temporal frame is a narrative, and as such a construction; the narrative of a rational time is no different.

In pre-industrial British society, work and leisure were not as clearly demarcated (Burns 1973, Downes et al. 1976). Shaped by the growth of puritan morality and industrialisation, the social construction of leisure in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, comes about to necessarily preserve some personal time within a time increasingly taken up by work. The apparition of leisure is no more than 'the spectacle of everyday life being swamped by the tide of capitalist industry, and subsequently of

¹²¹ Also see Chapter 6 for a more in-depth analysis of work in relation to gambling.

¹²² See Thrift & Glennie (2009) for a thorough and interesting account which re-conceptualises Thompson's notion of time-discipline.

this tide receding under pressure from workers, to leave an increasing number of hours of freely disposable time.’ (Burns 1973: 44). In this context, leisure activities also become disciplined and have to be morally legitimised by the criteria of the work ethic (Bailey 1987 [1978]). In that sense, the creation of leisure is deeply interrelated with the aims of production.¹²³

‘Social life outside the work situation has not re-emerged; it has been created afresh, in forms which are themselves the creatures of industrialism, which derive from it *and which contribute to its development, growth and further articulation.*’ (Burns 1973: 46, original emphasis)

This division is engendered by a new economic morality where time becomes a value to be used with economy: people are urged to spend it efficiently and not to waste it away. As Thompson famously describes, in the Victorian period ‘[t]ime becomes currency: it is not passed but spent’ (1967: 61). This narrative of clock time as a uniform, homogenizing and oppressive independent force (Thrift & Glennie 2009) is intertwined with, and akin to, the narrative of modern money as a dehumanising and homogenizing universal yardstick (Maurer 2006). Both are portrayed as negative and abstract tools of calculation whose existence is external to human activities. Time is reduced to the function of calculating value; it is an ‘illusion of sequences’ (Ricoeur 1980: 169). The measurement that clock time provides fills in the need for precise calculation which has grown out of an increasing cash economy (Thrift 1990 [1980]). This narrative feeds in to the construction of an economic rationality which has turned measurements of probability into tools for taming the future and its uncertainties, where individuals are expected to follow the march of progress (see Chapter 1). As a result, planning of the future now dominates our actions in the present.

‘The new economic calculation put a financial value on future time so that an objective future became a part of the habitus of the worker. Not only present but future time was now money.’ (Thrift 1990 [1980]: 119)

This means that modernity has been equated with a radical compression of spatial and temporal horizons (Harvey 1989, Kern 2003 [1983]), with the commodisation and control of labour time (Thompson 1967) and with the ‘annihilation of space through time’ (Harvey 1989). This grand narrative has reinforced the idea that time is abstracted

¹²³ Providing leisure activities is also a profit-making activity.

from its relation with human activities and that it is an external object individuals have no control over. Yet, philosophers, geographers, sociologists and anthropologists have all successively deconstructed this abstraction of time to show that time is multiple and embedded in social practices (Adam 1995, Bender & Wellberry 1991, Gell 1992, Munn 1997, Thrift & May 2001, see Thrift and Glennie 1996: 278-282, 2009: 66-68 for a thorough literature review). In the steps of Bourdieu (1977 [1972]) and the phenomenologists (Heidegger 2008 [1927], Merleau-Ponty 2002 [1945]), I will show that time is experienced in a diversity of ways while playing since it is made through the actions of the gambler's body in a specific space. While acknowledging the too often forgotten ability of gamblers to be time makers, I will also show that time in other instances remains an instrument of discipline and power (Foucault 1979, Munn 1997: 109-111, Postill 2002) as it clearly comes across through the way Chinese individuals in London unequally experience their capacity as time makers. This does not mean as Munn (1997) argues that we should try to conclusively decide whether time is about making time or being made by it: it is about both.

A multitude of opportunities to win

The majority of casino gamblers lose money over time (bar a lucky win followed by abstinence) while being aware that this is the case. 'The house always wins' I often heard them explain to me. Despite this, I argue that it is not quite true to say that they do not win. At the end of a gambling session or of a series of gambling sessions, the amount of money spent is indeed very often higher than the money won. However, this does not negate the fact that gamblers still experience repeated times during these gambling sessions when they win. These wins are not taken into account if one is only focusing on the financial outcome, that is to say the quantity of money made. The best way to describe this would be to start with the story of a Turkish man striking a lucky day. This story was told to me by one of my key interlocutors, Ahmei, a Chinese woman from Mainland China in her late 40s (see Chapter 2). Ahmei is a keen player of roulette, especially the electronic roulette machine, the game she describes in the story. The story is used by Ahmei to illustrate her point that roulette is a quick game; that you lose or you win at roulette, it all happens very quickly.

‘Yesterday at the bookie, there was a ‘foreigner’ by my side, my friend was playing next to him, next to this electronic roulette machine. I was watching this man; he was maybe taking a few thousand out, every time it was 50 quid, 50 quid, 50 quid, 50 quid again. He was holding them in his hand, a very thick stack; he was holding them here. He was really, how to say, really clever this man. He would bet a few numbers and he wouldn’t change them, he would never; not like us be changing repeatedly for these numbers or those ones. Once he bet his numbers, he would go for it, ‘Bang!’ each time £100. On the machine, in the bookies, you can only bet up to £100 each time. It’s not like the roulette game in the casino where you can bet £500 on a game; they restrict you. In a second, he would throw two notes of £50, ‘Bang!’ Sometimes, he would not even hit a two-numbers bet; his £100 would just get eaten away. But he would still carry on playing. He would carry on till the end it seems, till after playing a few hundred pounds he would obtain what he had in a single hand. In the end, he won. He won probably a few thousand pounds. After watching him win, I told him that, today, he was pretty lucky. He replied that Saturday, Sunday and Monday, he lost about £4000 pounds. He said to me ‘Today I’m winning, but I’m still losing’.

In this quote, Ahmei describes with much admiration the way the Turkish man gambles. Ahmei gets particularly excited when she mentions the £50 notes and the way the man throws them into the machine, without a sign of fear, as she expresses with her enthusiastic ‘Bangs’. Her admiration culminates when after such impressive ‘pluck’ he finally wins. The end of the story turns out as a striking contrast to this praising description with the punter confiding that today’s winning is not enough to catch up with his losses. It makes it hard to know if he has ‘really’ won. Is his successful winning not cancelled out by his total losses? Are his stamina and courage not making him a winner anyway? Has this man won or has he not? The discourse of Ahmei is ambiguous and could go either way: he has won now, in the immediate present time, but he is not winning in the long run. Winning is taking place in two different times which seem to contradict each other: a present time where winning provides an immediate sense of satisfaction, although temporary, and a future time where winning is the potential of success as the result of one’s actions in the present.

Ahmei herself, when talking about winning, clearly explains that you cannot say you do not win at gambling even if you are effectively losing. This point is beautifully illustrated by her reaction when I asked her if gambling is not irrational after all.

Claire: 'Every gambler believes that they will win, don't they? It doesn't really make much sense, does it?'

Ahmei: 'No you can't say that, that it doesn't make sense. It does make sense; sometimes you do win. You can't say that, I'm telling you, if you lose ten out of ten times, it's not that you haven't got the confidence, it's not like that, you have opportunities. If you go ten times, two times out of ten you win. Those who are lucky can win up to five times. You win here five times, each time £100, but when you lose, each time you lose £300, so you say... although you win five times and lose the five other times, when you win you only win £100, but when you lose you lose £300, you are still losing a lot more.'

At first view, it seems that Ahmei is contradicting herself saying that a gambler wins on one side ('sometimes you do win') and loses on the other ('you are still losing a lot more'). But I would argue that the contradiction only remains if one limits the meaning of winning to the financial performance, that is to say the total sum in money of winnings and losses of a gambling session or of a series of gambling sessions.

In an early, and the only, sociological study of roulette, full of rich ethnographic detail gathered through the eye of a part-time croupier, Oldman comments that roulette players only appear to behave irrationally as long as we assume that 'the rationale for playing is one based upon an arithmetic calculus of wins and losses' (1974: 411). According to his observations, "'wins' and 'losses' are discrete events that characterise each particular spin, but which are not measured in terms of money quantities. A win is merely a win, and is not of any particular size.' (1974: 423). This point sets the scene for my argument since it shows that the measurement of wins and losses in terms of money quantities is limiting our understanding of gambling as an experience in its own right. It is assumed that the logic of accumulation is the only possible one when money is put at stake and that actions in the present are consequently taking place in a linear conception of time directed towards an end. It is important here not to separate the experience of time from the logic of accumulation in order to surpass the distinction between rationality and irrationality. When gambling, time has a logic of its own, that of the gambler's bodily actions and decisions.

The focus onto the final outcome diverts our attention from what happens during the time spent gambling, where the action of the gambler is split into a multitude of playing times which are taking place on a constant and repeated basis giving a feeling of endlessness. The action seems to be flowing constructed onto the rhythmic succession

of single gambling events. Goffman (1967) describes those single gambling events as 'spans of play'. Each 'span of play' is divided into three phases: the 'squaring off phase' when a decision is made, the 'determination phase' when the decision is played, and the 'disclosure phase' when the outcome is given, confirming (or not) the decision (1967: 111). Each of those single gambling events is an independent entity. Nevertheless, in a casino, gamblers will rarely play a single gambling event on its own and are more likely to play a series of them over an extended period of time, which varies between circumstances and individuals. For that reason, it often feels that the outcome of the preceding 'span of play' is put at stake in the next one. In reality, it is the money won, still left, borrowed or withdrawn to carry on the game that is at stake. The outcome of the next bet will not necessarily change the trend of the general outcome, that is to say how much actually one has lost or won. But this does not mean that one cannot win or lose the next bet. Each span of play provides a new opportunity and a new uncertainty as to what might actually happen, regardless of the general probability of the game.

Although it is true that one can mathematically determine that there are more chances to lose than to win while gambling in a casino, and that the more you play the more your chances to lose increase over time, one can never determine what the outcome of each single gambling event is going to be (unless the player, or the house, are cheating). In a gambling session of, for example, one hour at roulette, the gambler has theoretically the possibility to bet every minute or a bit less with a dealer of average skills.¹²⁴ In the theoretical condition that the gambler plays every spin of the wheel and that nothing interrupts the rhythm of the croupier, the gambler will experience an average of 60 spans of play. In an hour, a gambler has 60 opportunities to win, independent of the fact that his final financial performance has a higher chance of being unsuccessful.

This decomposition of the time spent gambling clearly reveals that there is more in gambling than what a retrospective review from the final result tells us. By looking at the winnings or losses of a gambler, his/her actions are only 'judged 'acceptable [or not] after all'' (Ricoeur 1980: 174), and are not considered at the time they are being carried out. In order to understand the agency of gamblers as time makers in the next section I

¹²⁴ Information that I obtained from interviews with experienced dealers.

give a phenomenological observation of Ahmei's actions on an occasion when I observed her playing at an electronic roulette machine in the casino.

Playing for time

Ahmei and her daughter are both playing in the rank of roulette machines where I thought I would find them. They are sitting next to each other; an empty seat is separating them. Song, their Chinese Malaysian friend, is sitting the rank opposite to theirs. Song is not the talkative type, and certainly not when she is gambling. Actually, most gamblers while gambling would refuse to chat unless it is about the game itself, and even then... I know there is no point engaging with her. She will not like it. I go directly to Ahmei and her daughter who are more likely to give me some attention. Ahmei's daughter is losing a starting capital of £40. She is not at all happy about it. Ahmei is also saying that she is not doing so great but she is not as upset as her daughter. I can see on the monitor screen that she has about £80 worth of winnings when I arrive. To engage conversation I congratulate her on the amount. She explains that she has already fed the machine with £70 so she is not really winning. I watch Ahmei play maybe for an hour or two. I love those rare opportunities I can observe gamblers while they are using an electronic version of a casino game. The machine calculates all sort of interesting variables that I would not be able to observe so precisely if I was watching an individual gambler at a gaming table. The most interesting functions are the ones that keep track of the money still to invest (or the sum of the remaining capital plus the money just won, depending on how or when you look at it) and the amount of capital played at each spin of the wheel. I have chosen this particular session because it illustrates a number of the calculations and actions taken by Ahmei and other gamblers on numerous other occasions during which I observed them playing in the casino.

When I start watching Ahmei has about £80 to play. She invests on average between £15 and £19 worth of bets for each spin of the wheel. Sometimes she goes as low as £12 and other times as high as £30. Then, I can observe on the roulette screen how she divides up between the 37 numbers (0 to 36) (see picture 6 below), how much money

she is investing for each round, and that she mainly likes to play single and split bets (see picture 9 below).¹²⁵

The image shows a standard roulette table layout. The numbers 1 through 36 are arranged in three columns. The first column contains numbers 1, 4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 19, 22, 25, 28, 31, 34. The second column contains numbers 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20, 23, 26, 29, 32, 35. The third column contains numbers 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 24, 27, 30, 33, 36. The numbers 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 12, 14, 16, 18, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 30, 32, 34, and 36 are in red pockets, while the others are in black pockets. The number 0 is in a green pocket at the top. To the left of the numbers are betting areas: '1-18' and 'EVEN' for the first 12 numbers; a red diamond and a black diamond for the second 12 numbers; and 'ODD' and '19-36' for the third 12 numbers. At the bottom, there are three '2-1' betting areas corresponding to the three columns of numbers.

		0		
1-18 EVEN	1st 12	1	2	3
		4	5	6
		7	8	9
		10	11	12
Red Diamond Black Diamond	2nd 12	13	14	15
		16	17	18
		19	20	21
		22	23	24
ODD 19-36	3rd 12	25	26	27
		28	29	30
		31	32	33
		34	35	36
		2-1	2-1	2-1

Picture 6:
Roulette table layout. (Source: www.casinosonline.co.uk/images/roulette-pic2.gif)

¹²⁵ Two-number bets, split bets, are also called ‘en cheval’, which is the French appellation for it.

- A** Straight up 35:1
- bet is placed on a single number
- B** Split 17:1
- bet splits 2 numbers
- C** Street 11:1
- bet covers 3 numbers in a row
- D** Corner 8:1
- bet covers 4 numbers
- E** Basket 6:1
- bet covers 1, 2, 3 and both zeros
- F** Line 5:1
- bet covers 6 numbers in two rows
- G** Column 2:1
- bet covers 12 numbers
- H** Doren 2:1
- bet covers 12 numbers
- I** Low number 1:1
- bet covers numbers between 1-18
- J** High number 1:1
- bet covers numbers between 19-36
- K** Red / Black 1:1
- bet covers red or black numbers
- L** Odd / Even number 1:1
- bet covers odd or even numbers
- M** Zero Split 17:1
- bet splits both zeros



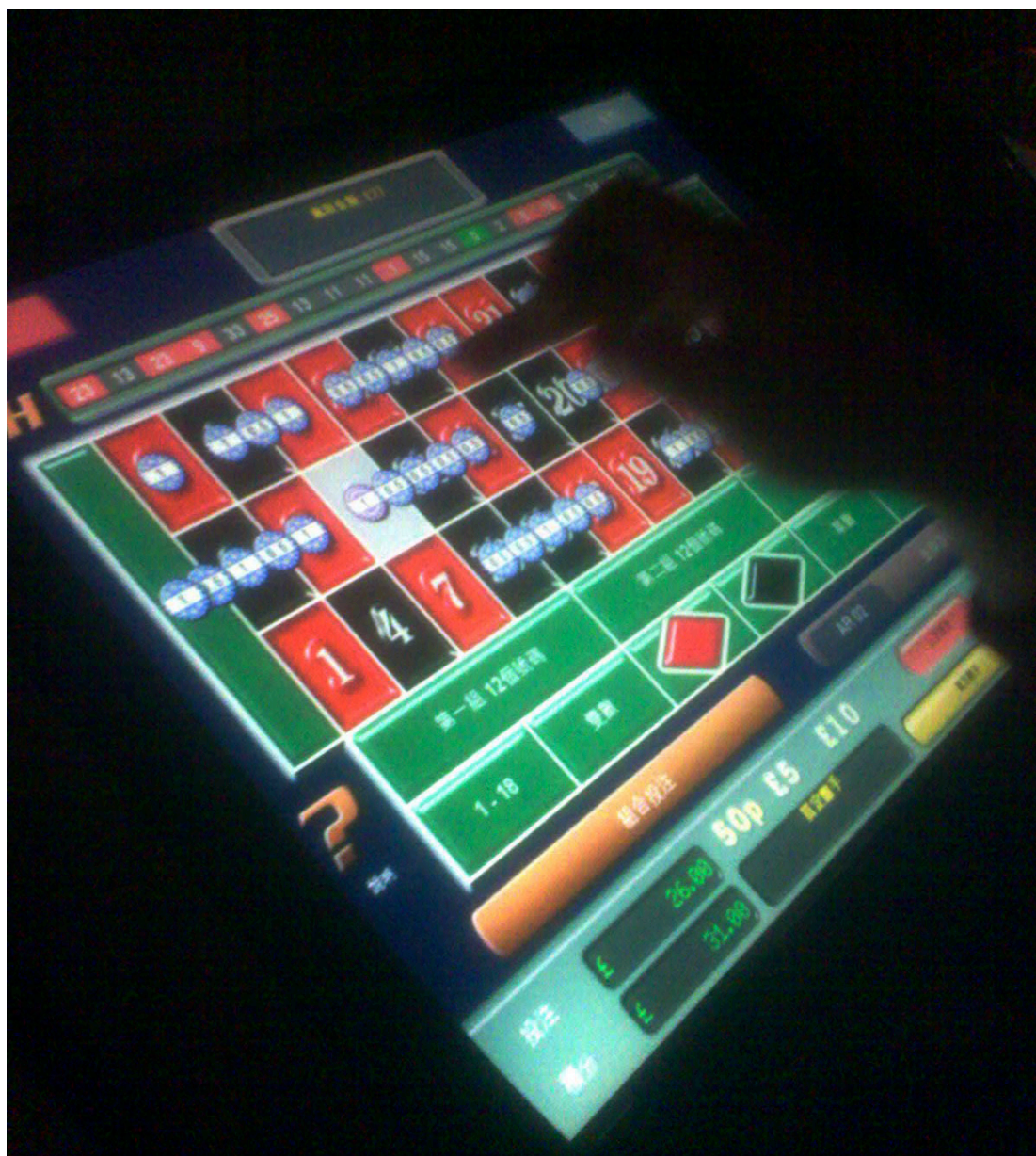
Picture 7:

The different types of bets at roulette and their odds.

(Source: www.fivestargamble.com/roulette.html)

A few times, Ahmei plays so many numbers in one go that there are only a few numbers that are not covered. Most interestingly, these features of the electronic machine allow me to analyse how much money Ahmei actually wins when she hits a number. As she likes to spread her money over several numbers (see pictures 8 and 9 below), her chances to get the numbers coming out are significantly higher. Technically, she often wins, that is to say she often hits a number. However, her higher chances to hit a number do not necessarily make her win money. In the case of that specific day, she has a high proportion of correct numbers and wins some money repeatedly each time. But the money she wins can be less or not much more, sometimes just a few pounds more,

than the capital she invests at each round.¹²⁶ It feels that she is just buying time to keep having a go at the game.



Picture 8: Ahmei is placing bets at an electronic roulette machine.

Ahmei has bet £26 already on this game as it is indicated in the top box at the bottom left corner of the screen. From what can be seen (the hand is hiding a part of the screen) there are at least 5 numbers out of 37 that are not covered with a bet. Ahmei has £31 left in the machine to play with as it is indicated in the bottom box at the bottom left corner of the screen.

¹²⁶ The odds at roulette for a single bet are 35 to 1, so whenever Ahmei hits a number in this game of roulette the amount she wins is £18 for a 50p single bet, £35 for a £1 single bet and £53 for a £1.50 single bet. Ahmei does not go over £1.50 per single bet and only places a few £1 or £1.50 single bets as she mainly goes for the 50p single bets. She occasionally goes for en-cheval bets whose odds are 17 to 1. So whenever Ahmei hits a number on an en-cheval bet of 50p, she wins £8.50, £17 for an en-cheval bet of £1, and £25.50 for an en-cheval bet of £1.50. Although it was not possible to record the details of each bet for each game because the game goes too fast, this summary of potential winnings helps to explain how Ahmei could win such little money or lose some whenever she hit a number. The amount she won could be less or not much more than what she had invested.



Picture 9: Ahmei is waiting for the result to come up.

We can see that the wheel is spinning. According to the information in the boxes at the bottom left corner Ahmei has £18 invested and she still has £12 left to play. Although there might be a bit more since the wheel is hiding a part of the screen, we can see that there are at least 11 numbers out of 37 not covered with a bet.

Ahmei plays for quite a while on that same rhythm, more than an hour. Her winnings go down quite low, close to zero at some points, despite her often placing a bet on the winning number. This is due to the fact that her bets are too spread out at each game (see pictures 8 and 9). On average, she wins slightly less than what she has invested. In the end, she finally manages to break that trend. She comes back to an average capital of £40-50 for a bit. Suddenly, she hits a single number where she has placed a bet of £1.50 which gives her a winning of £53 in one go. From £29.50, she jumps to £82.50.¹²⁷

¹²⁷ A sum which does not take into account the amount already invested to make this gain of £53. The sum invested was £17, so technically the actual gain is £35.

Probably because she has struggled to come back to that point, she decides to stop here. She has technically only won £12.50 since she started with a capital of £70. The process of playing some money and winning it back gives the impression that nothing has been achieved. But this is not what matters to Ahmei, what really matters to her is to keep playing. As soon as she has stopped, she looks uneasy and bored and finds it hard to leave the machines. What to do next then? We chat for a while and go and watch other games, but Ahmei is only interested in playing more. Her daughter who has not been very lucky has already gone back. It does not last long before Ahmei rejoins her and finally loses all her winnings ... and more.

For her second attempt, she starts playing with a lower budget of £20 that she loses pretty quickly. Annoyed, she inserts £40 in the machine. This does not last long either. She inserts another £20, and another, and another... (I lost track of how many). Although this second time she does not play for less money than the first time when she inserted £80 in one go, she uses a smaller amount of capital repeatedly. This changes the way she places her bets. With a smaller amount of capital she cannot play as many numbers as she did earlier. Although she was not really winning money, she was still hitting winning numbers. This time, she invested less money each spin, about half of the amount she was playing earlier and could not, as such, cover as many numbers as she did earlier. As she keeps losing she also keeps changing tables.¹²⁸ It seems that she is losing her confidence and also the flow of play she was immersed in earlier. She starts playing safer bets which have a smaller potential for returns, such as two or four numbers bets, even red/black and even/odd bets (see picture 7) that she did not play at all earlier. In contrast to the previous session, she only plays a few singles. As a result, the layout of her bets at each game looks much more contained and not as spread out. She is reducing the risks as she is losing, covering many possibilities but with less money. When she was playing with more money she was still trying to reduce the risk but in a different style. She was betting on as many numbers as possible but the stakes were higher, mainly single bets with a few split ones and some doubled single bets. A higher betting capital gave her bigger chances of returns. At least, she had higher

¹²⁸ Gamblers playing on these electronic machines have the choice between two different roulette tables (or more), which are open 'live' roulette tables with a croupier. So the rhythm of play also varies depending on the croupier, the number of players at the table, and the outcomes of the game. The rhythm of play is in that sense more irregular to the one provided by electronic roulette monitors attached to an automated wheel, whose lapse of time between each spinning is the same. Electronic roulette monitors attached to this wheel-robot also offer a cheaper starting bet, 25p. On the other electronic machines, the starting bet is 50p.

chances of hitting a number and of playing for longer. In the first session, she was never really winning or losing but managed to keep going in a constant flow of actions.

Her friend Song has a similar but slightly more intense style of play. She bets on so many numbers that she nearly plays all the numbers on the table, sometimes only leaving three or four without bets. She also tends to play more money than Ahmei on each bet. Like Ahmei she often wins but she does not necessarily win more money than she has already invested. However, she tends to lose more money when she misses a number, and wins far more money when she gets one right. As I was watching her betting on many numbers and not winning enough or at all I could hear her complaining. She kept repeating ‘我买太多，我不会赢！’, *wo mai tai duo wo bu hui ying*, literally saying, ‘I bought too many [numbers], I won’t win!’. The ways both Ahmei and Song are playing are compromised versions of the extreme example given by Oldman where ‘a punter who covers 35 numbers, each with a single chip, will ‘win’ on nearly every spin’, which makes him win on one side and lose on the other.

In this description of Ahmei’s betting actions at the electronic roulette machine, ‘[t]he passage of time – non-gambling real time – is no longer a relevant measurement’ (Hayano 1982: 6) and Benjamin Franklin’s adage ‘time is money’ seems to have been reversed to ‘money is time’. When Ahmei is absorbed in the act of gambling, time is not an instrument of measure anymore nor is money an end; gambling becomes, at last, the means of satisfying the process of spending time according to the rhythm of her own actions. Time, not money, becomes the reward, and as such spending and circulating money are markers of Ahmei’s rhythm. The movement of Ahmei’s playing echoes Schüll’s (2005, 2006) observations of machine players in Las Vegas where:

‘Th[e] movement [of playing] is autotelic in that its aim is to perpetuate itself rather than maximise monetary payoff in the climax of a jackpot. In the economy of the zone, ‘It’s not about *winning* – it’s about *continuing to play*’, said Lola, a young buffet waitress.’ (2006: 234)

Hayano made a similar remark about poker gambling.

‘Full-time poker-playing is a continuous, timeless activity. Many regulars regard daily poker-playing as one long game, interrupted only by periods of sleep. Many regulars eat their daily meals from movable trays positioned directly at their side so they do not have to leave the table or miss a hand. These players mark the passage of time not by clock hours alone but by how well they are doing’ (1982: 52)

Inevitably, stopping gambling becomes problematic since it also means relinquishing the freedom of enjoying one's rhythm. Gamblers do not stop gambling like they stop for lunch or a day at work. As a matter of fact, most of them find it hard to stop at all, especially if they are winning.

Stopping when you are winning

The attraction of gambling is often legitimised by the possibility of winning a lot of money by only investing a small capital. This image of the big win is symbolised in the lottery, which can make you win millions of pounds by only spending a few. Ideally, you win enough money not to have to worry anymore for the rest of your life. Needless to say, this ideal of a big win does not represent the daily experience of the majority of gamblers. Lottery players are not actually so different since many of them will repeatedly play every week all their life without success. Casino gamblers are aware that winning big is exceptional and that the more they play the more they are likely to lose in the long run. However, as I have just shown, they paradoxically experience winning on a more frequent basis by gambling in the casino. As such, when they reach a nice rhythm of repeated wins, they just want to make it last and find it hard to put an end to it.

This was evident in the way Ahmei was gambling at electronic roulette. In the first session, she won £82.50 out of which she made a profit of £12.50. She is not losing but she is not winning a significant amount of money. She is far from making it 'big'. Later on, encouraged by the fact that her daughter is still playing, she gives in to her desire to play more and starts another session where she actually loses it all, and more. This coincides with what was said in the introduction: gamblers are more likely to lose than to win. What I am wondering here is how much would be big enough for Ahmei to consider that she has won? £15? £50? £100? £500? My point is that although gamblers want to win money, it is unclear when they would reach that point of having earned enough money so they would not need to carry on playing. When you are winning at gambling it is hard to know when 'big' is big enough. How do you know when to stop? When do you know you have actually won? You could stop now but if you carried on playing you could also win more money, and ultimately reach a bigger win.

Song, one day, complains to me that she won £700 from a capital of £60 to finally lose it all because she did not stop at the right time. This was very important to her. Ahmei who was with her when it happened also mentioned this story to me on another occasion when there were just the two of us present. She explained that Song was just being greedy, she was not satisfied with what she already had. She wanted more. Being greedy is also how Tom, a Chinese dealer from Malaysia in his 50s, described the difficulty of stopping gambling when he is playing.¹²⁹

‘I still go gambling, [laugh] I have been telling her [my wife]. And then she tells me that I shouldn’t be so greedy, if I win one or two hundred pound I should be happy with it. But the human nature is that everyone is greedy, everyone is greedy. When you win 200, you want 400. It’s never enough, it [greed] always gets recycled to attract the customer to go in. Every customer is gonna think ‘Oh, at the next spin I’m gonna win my money back, next spin I’m gonna win my money back or tomorrow is gonna be a better day’. This is how the typical customer is coming back. Nobody will say ‘Oh I lost so much money over the years, I’m gonna stop now’. They can’t, because they’re thinking about their losses. This is a vicious circle in debt. This is why my wife is telling me next time, or from now on, if you win you win, that’s it, don’t be greedy. Take whatever winning, walk out, tomorrow is another day. [laugh]’

Ahmei describes this situation as ‘you can lose but you cannot win’, literally translated from the Mandarin 输得起, 赢不起 *shu de qi, ying bu qi*. By saying that a gambler has the ability to lose but not to win, Ahmei implies that it is harder to stop gambling when you are winning than when you are losing. This does not mean that it is easy to stop when you are losing, but because you have lost so much before, when you are finally winning, you want to make this opportunity last longer because you know it will end eventually. You want to grab your luck while it is still there, before it goes away.¹³⁰ You want to make the most of this auspicious present. You want to make the best of winning now.

In some cases, winning may not be sufficient. While gamblers are attracted to the idea of immediate returns without having to wait, they will not necessarily be satisfied if they win too quickly. Most gamblers I have spoken to when they win very early on during their visit at the casino, find it hard to stop early. One of my informants, Dan, a

¹²⁹ Chapter 7 provides an analysis of greed.

¹³⁰ Chapter 6 discusses the notion of luck.

British Born Chinese man in his late 20s exposes this dilemma by describing his interaction with one of his friends who won big cash in his first ten minutes gambling.

‘A month ago, I went down to the casino with my friends. My friend plays two hands, and on the second one he won £700, on the second hand. He picked up his chips, and he said, ‘What should we play next?’ I said, ‘What do you mean what do we play next?’ I say, ‘No, we leave!’. ‘Hang out’, he said, ‘Leave now? We’ve only been here for like ten minutes’. I go, ‘The whole point of you coming down was you to win money’. He goes, ‘Yeah’. ‘You’ve won money, yeah?’ He goes, ‘Yeah, I’m up, of course I’m up’. ‘Then what’s the point of staying?’ Then he thought about it, and then he goes, ‘You know what? I never thought of it that way’. ‘Yes. Oh my god, leave now! Come on, let’s have a nice meal on you, of course, because you’re up’. And then he goes, ‘Oh yeah, you’re right you know’. And that’s what we did, we left, and he goes, ‘You know if I hadn’t gone I would have carried on playing into one more or lost-it-all, and then lost more money’. I go, ‘I know’. And he goes, ‘I am like that’.’

Winning too quickly is not so much the problem here, what is though, is the need to perceive this early win as the achievement of a planned action, as the time to stop. Stopping on an early win is finalising a process, winning, that has hardly started, a process that one wants to nurture and not put an end to. Gamblers’ actions are resisting a morality that is rooted in the irreversibility of time. Forgetting to stop when fully engaged in an activity is not unique to gambling. As Heintz (2005) shows, for service enterprises’ employees in Bucharest and the Romanian society at large, the idea of finitude and timing which are at the heart of the pervasive narrative of time-discipline are not easily translated within daily practices.

‘Responsible, mature women will arrive late because they met with neighbours on their way, engaged in a conversation and simply forgot to watch their watches. As the awareness of the flow of time surfaces only now and then, so does the awareness of its value. The ‘why’ that should accompany the allocation of a time-limit is often absent, even when it is entirely one’s own responsibility to manage one’s time.’ (2005: 178)

In gambling, time-discipline and the idea of reaching an end are not just forgotten, they are rejected. This filters through in my earlier description, when Ahmei is evidently playing electronic roulette just to prolong playing. The point is not to reach a final end but to keep the momentum going. In effect, Ahmei seems to voluntarily trap herself in an eternal present where anything beyond the imminent outcome of her bets is purposely absent, and the past experience of her losses forgotten. In this quest for time,

winning and losing are constantly succeeding each other during the actions of each individual gambler in a unique sequence. This rejection of an irreversible time in favour of an alternative echoes Levi-Strauss' (1992 [1964]) description of myth and music. He explains that both myth and music 'requir[es] a temporal dimension in which to unfold (...) only in order to deny [time]' (1992 [1964]: 15-16). Levi-Strauss means here that myth and music create their own rhythms beyond an 'irreversible and therefore irredeemably diachronic' (1992 [1964]: 16) time; like gambling they are 'instruments for the obliteration of [an unidirectional] time' (1992 [1964]: 16). Following Lefebvre, I believe the concept of 'rhythm' is most apt to describe how gamblers experience an apparently similar repetition of events in an idiosyncratic manner within a specific space (2004).¹³¹ Lefebvre summarises this as follows:

'No rhythm without repetition in time and space, without *reprises*, without returns, in short without measure [*mesure*]. But there is no identical, absolute repetition, indefinitely. Whence the relation between repetition and difference. When it concerns the everyday, rites, ceremonies, fêtes, rules and laws, there is always something new and unforeseen that introduce itself into the repetitive: difference.' (2004: 6)

Like the term 'TimeSpace' coined by Thrift and May (2001), rhythm does not fall into the trap of a binary description of temporal movements. Repetition and change, cyclicity and linearity, space and time, stasis and progress are accommodated. This theorisation is particularly suitable to understand that time is lived in a diversity of ways and the rational, means-end narrative is only one among many other ways to experience temporality. The concept of rhythm is also particularly appropriate to differentiate the unequal ways Chinese individuals in London experience and make time as I will now demonstrate through an exploration of life rhythms outside the casino.

Clashes of rhythms; or the arbitrary distinction of productive and non-productive times

Many of my interlocutors continuously expressed that they gamble to avoid boredom. 'We have nowhere else to go but the casino' was a common refrain among Chinese people in London, gamblers and non-gamblers, to explain the Chinese propensity to

¹³¹ Chapter 5 addresses the question of time as it is made and experienced within the space of the casino.

gamble. In such a discourse, gambling provides a solution to boredom. That is how Ying, a Fujianese man in his 30s explains his avid interest for gambling in the casino:

‘Because here, in Europe, it’s very boring, there is only the casino where you can come and have a good time, that’s how you slowly, slowly, slowly get hooked.’

As I ask him why he thinks that Chinese people tend to gamble more in the UK than in China, he goes further and describes the feeling of being bored as a socially empty and slow time in contrast to a rich social life in China, to a time going fast at work or to gambling:

‘It’s because in China, you have a lot of relatives and friends you can talk to, you can give them a phone call, have a chat with them, you can stroll down the street, look for girls...Here, where do you go? You go to work, but you don’t do very much for yourself when you work. When you finish work, you’re on break, you feel bored. When you’re working, time goes very fast, but once you’ve finished work you feel really bored on your own. That’s why, Chinese people once they arrive here, they end up gambling. In the casino, you can find excitement and the time goes fast. That’s why most of them go there.’

Ahmei, who we observed playing electronic roulette earlier, is no different. Now that her daughter is about to graduate, and she is earning some money by working part-time, Ahmei’s mission in the UK is finished. She does not need to work as much as she used to when her daughter was still studying (she only does some cleaning at the weekends from time to time). She has plenty of time to kill before she goes back to China in a year’s time.¹³² She finds it hard to occupy this time and feels terribly bored when she stays at home on her own while her daughter is working. Gambling, she has found, is the best way to occupy this empty time. This feeling of boredom as expressed by Ying, and Ahmei echoes a more general discourse where boredom was described to me as particularly acute among the Chinese community in the UK due to their long and unsocial working hours in the catering industry which prevents them from participating in other leisure activities. Since the casino is open when they finish their shift, it is supposedly the only leisure activity available to them.¹³³

132 At the time Ahmei was waiting for her daughter to have completed her 10 years residency in the UK after which period she could claim a residency permit (see footnote 87). Ahmei returned to China in October 2009.

133 The space of the casino and the relationship that Chinese casino players entertain with it will be explored in more detail in Chapter 5.

In various examples, boredom figures as a ‘problem’ that needs to be solved (Kopytoff 1994) since time has been ‘wasted’ without being lived usefully. As time is irreversible there is no chance to catch up on the time that has been ‘wasted’. At first sight, the discourses of my interlocutors seem to confirm the argument that gambling is constructed in opposition to a time alienated by work (Reith 2002), as ‘a ready means of overcoming boredom (...) making meaning out of meaninglessness’ (Barbalet 1999: 642).¹³⁴ I argue, however, that those individual feelings of boredom must be differentiated from the moral discourse that time must be used productively and cannot be wasted away, as I described at the beginning of this chapter. To show my argument more clearly, it is important to take a close look at how the concept of boredom is intrinsically linked to the rationalisation of time and the distinction between work and leisure. As thoroughly detailed in the literature (Brisset & Snow 1993, Healy 1984, Klapp 1986, Spacks 1995), boredom is a phenomenon which emerges with modernity. It ‘seems likely that prior to increased leisure and affluence, it did not much matter whether life was deemed interesting or boring’ (Conrad 1997: 466). It is not a coincidence that boredom, that is to say the feeling of standing still or going slowly, is co-extensive with the grand narrative of time acceleration. Both discourses reinforce the idea that there is a distinction to be made between productive and non-productive times.

Saying this, as I have shown early on in this chapter, production is not clearly separated from consumption and the activity of gambling cannot be seen as the exact opposite of a productive activity. In that sense, the absence of boredom in the casino is not accidental but is, like its counterpart, productive time, a social construction which is actively managed, emptied out and protected in order to generate a particular way of being in the world.¹³⁵ As three recent ethnographies of an Aboriginal population in Yuendumu, Australia (Musharbash 2007), urban unemployed youth in Ethiopia (Mains 2007) and in India (Jeffrey 2010) illustrate, boredom is better understood as ‘locally engendered and socioculturally specific’ (Musharbash 2007: 315). Boredom is ‘a response to rather than a by-product of modernity’ (2007: 315) which takes place in a diversity of complex and uneven temporalities evolving in different social and cultural contexts. My research further illustrates this point while also showing that time is unequally experienced by

¹³⁴ Practicing gambling as a way to avoid boredom is portrayed by some other authors (Błaszczynski, McConaghy & Frankova 1990, Coman, Burrows & Evans 1997, Trevorrow & Moore 1998) as being detrimental to the individual.

¹³⁵ This will be more thoroughly explored in Chapter 5 where I examine the question of time in relation to the space of the casino.

different individuals. The existence of different rhythms to ones' own creates the feeling of speed (or its absence), stillness or slowness and can make boredom or a sense of lack arise. Boredom is experienced as a time of slowing down or standing still because relatively other individuals appear to be experiencing a time which is advancing.

'We know that a rhythm is slow or lively only in relation to other rhythms (often our own: those of our walking, our breathing, our heart). This is the case even though each rhythm has its own specific measure: speed, frequency, consistency.' (Lefebvre 2004: 10)

It now becomes clear that what Chinese migrants articulate through the feeling of boredom is to be denied the opportunity to enjoy a time which is meaningful to the production of their selves. Peng, a Chinese Malaysia man also in his 30s who has been in the UK for less than a year confirms this impression. For him, feeling bored is linked to being lonely and the feeling of not fitting in the temporal frame of the UK which is much faster than in Malaysia where he has lived most of his life.

'On my own, I'm bored. Sometimes, when I'm not working, I don't know where to go. In a word, on my own I feel foolish. The difference is really big. Here it's not the same as in Malaysia. In Malaysia, I have much more freedom, much more. Life is slower. Walking is also slow, eating is also slow, everything is about taking your time. Here in the UK, everything is fast. When they walk... *I don't know*.¹³⁶ Maybe that's their life rhythm, isn't? They rush after time. Or maybe they make the time go faster? I don't know.'

Through the feeling of boredom, some Chinese migrants are expressing their difficulty to dispose of a time which allows them to construct a positive identity for themselves, a time in which they can fully be actors. This question becomes even more evident as some of my other interlocutors, mostly part of the population of Chinese young professionals I describe in Chapter 2, did not, on the contrary, express feelings of boredom in their life, and certainly did not explain why they gambled as a way to avoid boredom. For Lewis, a mainlander working as a trader in the City (see Chapter 2), gambling was only one of the many other entertainments that occupied his free time outside work.¹³⁷

'I do other activities as well. I do go to cinema, I do go to concerts, watch plays. It's just different. You need just other activities, play sports... Gambling is just one of my entertainments, nothing conflicting.'

¹³⁶ Words in italic were originally said in English.

¹³⁷ Lewis mentioned that he also played some games online while at work.

Contrary to Ying, Peng and Ahmei for whom free time is slow and socially empty, Lewis felt that his free time was very precious and that he did not have enough of it to fill with all the things he would like to do. He describes his free time to be socially lively and all too brief.

Claire: 'What is worse for you: wasting time or wasting money?'

Lewis: 'Definitely wasting time is worse. Cos I always feel time is... I don't have enough. I have lots of books there waiting to be read but I don't have the time during the week. I only have weekends, but weekends I need to catch up with my friends, I need to go to courses, like playing music instruments... There is a hell of a lot of things to do. So I would rather spend some money to afford some time. That's what I do when I go for a long holiday, I throw away some profit for my [trading] book but I definitely need the time. So wasting money to me is not as bad as wasting time. Maybe it's because I'm not that desperate for money as some people are. It depends on your situation. If you are a millionaire who cares about wasting a few 10 grand? But if you are not that rich, if you're a tramp or a beggar, that's a lot of money. For me, definitely time is more important.'

Because time is so precious to him it is not surprising that Lewis does not make any distinction between his work, trading, and his pastime, gambling. The time spent working and gambling have the same quality: they are both about defining himself as an individual. When I ask him how he came to choose trading as a job he replied:

'It's not easy to find a job that you like. People normally moan about their jobs. They just do it to make money. But for me it's different. I enjoy the trading, enjoy the psychology behind that, enjoy the excitement, the pressure, the stress, the sense of achievement, all sort of things like that. It's the same as I enjoy poker, enjoy gambling. It's fun to me and it's also... challenge of intelligence when you crack something you just feel happy. That's why I choose trading. I think that's a born thing'

Despite the different ways they experience time, all of those individuals share something in common: they value the ability to be time makers and to shape themselves in the process. However, Chinese migrants in London enjoy unequal opportunities to realise their roles as time makers. By being bored, Chinese individuals express the feeling of not 'living' the time that is passing by, of not being able to shape themselves through their bodily actions as they would like.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I stressed the need to understand gambling from the gamblers' perspective. I gave more attention to how gamblers create meaning by being time makers. This allowed me to move away from a perception of 'time' as a singular entity that we all share equally and to consider that there are various and different temporalities that individuals live and experience. I demonstrated that gamblers' engagement with gambling cannot be reduced to winning as an end to reach since gamblers also experience winning as short and temporary moments while playing. I argue that more importance needs to be given to the flow of actions carried out by gamblers. This makes the irrationality argument irrelevant since it shows how despite an ineluctable path towards loss, gamblers also enjoy the agency they perform in the process of gambling.

Because the temporal experience of gambling feels so different from how time is experienced outside the casino it is tempting to present the activity of gambling as an escape from an alienating daily routine (Barbalet 1999, Reith 2002). It is on those terms that Schüll explains the desire not to win but to continue to play among machine players in Las Vegas. She describes how machine players 'exit social space' to enter another space that they call the 'zone', in which conventional spatial, bodily, monetary, and temporal parameters are suspended.' (2005: 73). In that context, she argues that '[w]inning too much, too soon, or too often disturbs the flow of play' and 'prevents you from getting into the zone' (2006). My analysis goes further. It refuses to see the 'zone' as a uniform space and time constructed in opposition to those outside the casino. It prefers to talk of 'rhythms' and to offer an account of how they take shape in various ways *both* inside and outside the casino and between different individuals. As such it focuses on gamblers' various capacities as time makers. My phenomenological observation of gamblers playing enables me to emphasise *how* the activity of gambling becomes meaningful in the making, through the constant repetition and succession of the gambler's bodily actions and the decisions taken, with the objective of experiencing more of this rhythm. In the casino, each gambler can thoroughly enjoy the intense movement of producing his/her own unique rhythm, with its own speed, frequency and intervals between each gambling event. Time becomes the reward, giving the impression that all that matters is to keep playing, experiencing indefinitely the ability to take action and make decisions. This thirst for time in gambling needs to be put in

perspective with the way each Chinese individual has experienced and experiences time outside the casino. Chinese gamblers in London do not share the same rhythms since their bodily actions and their orientations to the future and the past are inflected through the usual phenomenological filters of class, gender and, particularly age, as will be evident in the following chapters. Such clashes of rhythms were made evident in the way that some gamblers explained their desire to gamble as a way to tackle boredom and others did not. In the next chapter I examine Ahmei's gambling rhythm once again in order to explore suggestive connections and disjunctures between her behaviour and aspects of her life outside the casino, exploring both the productive and destructive nature of risk in relation to international migration.

Chapter 4

Speculating on the future: shaping the present

A short glimpse at Ahmei's actions when she is gambling enables me to move away from an emphasis on a desired end point, winning (or losing)¹³⁸ lots of money, to the time spent gambling and what actually happens during that time. Time, and how the gambler makes it and spends it, becomes the reward. Ahmei's absorption in the rhythm of her present actions contrasts slightly with the reason why she has come to the UK: to financially support her daughter's studies. She left China without the ability to speak English or a working visa and spent years of putting up with much harder work than the tranquil office job she occupied in Shenyang. All her energy has been focused on securing a good future for her daughter. This investment in the next generation coupled with an ability to be money-driven, thrifty and hard working sounds anomalous when associated with gambling. During fieldwork, the tension between gambling and doing business among Chinese people was thoroughly pervasive. The latter was praised as the mark of success achieved by a hard working Chinese community in Britain, and the former was disregarded as a morally condemnable activity which can only lead to bankruptcy and family division. As a result, many of the Chinese people I talked to were more inclined to portray themselves as skilful entrepreneurs and tended to deny that they were gamblers even though some actually liked a regular flutter. Gambling and entrepreneurship were separated in theory, but in practice they overlapped. It is this overlap I now turn to.

During my fieldwork Chinese people were reluctant to talk about gambling but were never short of details about the entrepreneurial and hard working ability of the Chinese

138 Freud (1928 and later Bergler: 1957), famously argued that gamblers do not strive to win but have an unconscious desire to lose. The argument made in Chapter 3 also challenges this focus on losing as an end point. A story told to me by Raymond, a dealer on the dice table, illustrates this particularly well: 'I remember one customer said to a mate of mine, he actually left a week later he had enough by this point. He'd won a considerable amount of money, for him a big, quite a big win and he turned round and he said 'Oh you've done all well there, aren't we?' This is what my mate said to him. He goes 'Yeah, yeah, yeah'. He goes 'I'm thinking how long it's going to take me to lose back'. And my mate was disgusted, he just wanted to vomit. He said to me 'I'm leaving'. Because he was going anyway. But that was the last... that was the real... the final jab in his back to get him out of the business. He said 'I can't handle these people anymore' and he left the casino. This customer was thinking 'How long will it take me to lose it back', which to me is a real, you know, a window of the mind on some gamblers. They just want to continue the process.'

community. This resonates with Oxfeld's (1993) study of Chinese businessmen in Calcutta in which she muses how this group, apparently driven by an entrepreneurial ethos based on hard work, frugality, foresight and trustworthiness, could abandon themselves to the wasteful pleasure of gambling. In this chapter, against the division of 'good' and 'bad' risk that I have already introduced, I reconsider the juxtaposition of gambling, entrepreneurship and migration in order to reassess understandings of success and failure. In that respect, I continue the work I started in Chapter 3 by extending my challenge of the separation between rational and irrational behaviours to other forms of risk-taking activities. I argue that not just understanding of gambling but also of other risk-taking activities should not be restricted to their ability to secure rewards or not. Whether doing business, migrating or gambling, risking money is a central mechanism through which people construct a sense of themselves.

I begin by revisiting the image of the 'good entrepreneur' among Chinese migrants. For this, I demonstrate that the positive stereotype of the Chinese entrepreneur in the UK hides a history of political and economic struggle. Chinese migrants to the UK have traditionally been pushed into the laundry and then the catering industry without alternatives. Besides this national context, I then show that success stories of Chinese entrepreneurs also represent narratives of modernity and progress re-appropriated on Chinese terms. The entrepreneur is the one who succeeds, so telling stories of successful entrepreneurs is claiming China and Chinese migrants' ability to succeed. The discursive associations of the entrepreneur with success are retrospective. Therefore, they make us forget that being an entrepreneur is not defined by the end that is reached, but by undertaking an action regardless of the outcome. In the rest of the chapter I demonstrate that migration is also an act of speculation on the future whose outcomes are uncertain, and that Chinese migrants are not equally equipped with social and economic resources to turn these ventures into rewards. Neither 'failure' or 'success' on these terms are necessarily permanent. Instead, I argue that what matters is to keep taking risks since doing so marks one out as a person of a certain kind, capable of acting on the world as well as being acted upon.

Doing business in the catering industry: hidden stories behind success

Mr Wang, a restaurateur on Gerrard Street was the boss of one of my close contributors, Mr Gong. Desperate to talk to as many Chinese people as possible I asked Mr Gong if I could have a chat with his boss (Mr Gong worked as a chef in his restaurant). I was starting to be intrigued at the time by the way Chinese people risked money in other life situations beyond the gambling environment, such as in business or in the stock market. I wanted to find out more about running a business in the UK centre of the Chinese catering industry. Mr Wang was welcoming and managed to find the time to see me in his busy schedule. I went to meet him in the calm hours of the afternoon when the service slows down. The interview was not as straightforward as with people I had previously met on a regular basis but it was still informative in many ways. It was clear that Mr Wang was saying to me what he thought I wanted to hear and his discourse echoed the positive stereotype of the Chinese community as a model minority, economically successful and hard working.

Mr Wang had come in his early 20s to the UK as a second choice. He really wanted to go to Québec, and had taken a course in French in Hong Kong, but he did not have enough money to get there. He had to fall back on London where his friends could help him to get a visa. Mr Wang first started to study English while he was working, but he quickly gave up studying in favour of work. His first job was as a waiter in a Chinese restaurant. Then, when he had saved enough money and acquired enough experience he started up his own restaurant. As I was asking him more details about business in the catering industry, Mr Wang emphasized the recipe for success: ability, hard work, being a good manager of staff and maintaining high standards. At the same time, he was complaining that his entrepreneurial efforts were curtailed in this hard time for business: he paid too much tax; he had lost clientèle because of the congestion charge; he had to spend a large share of his revenues on salaries. His description of the Chinese entrepreneur confirmed earlier comments and discourses I had heard and anticipated later ones; it was the same when he spoke of gambling:

‘Gambling can’t make your life good. Chinese culture means that they like it therefore they’re gambling I don’t know why. Some people are like ‘Oh I don’t know, I don’t understand English, I just want to keep in touch with this field, so I gamble’, something like that. I think this is an excuse not the real reasons.’

As many of my informants before, Mr Wang was distancing himself from the activity of gambling, as something that does take place in his community and is not a good thing, but in which he does not partake. On the other hand, he portrayed himself as one of those successful Chinese restaurateurs that the Chinese community can be proud of.

Months passed after our conversation. On one of those days when I visited a betting shop in Chinatown, I believed I had recognized Mr Wang. At first, I was not sure. I had only seen Mr Wang once and this was quite some time ago. The betting shop was also packed with people so I could not discern him clearly. After a while I was convinced it was him and that he had also noticed, and probably, recognized me. If he had, he was ignoring me. Later, he had to pass by my side to get out. This gave me the opportunity to greet him. Mr Wang was obviously embarrassed about the situation, perhaps hoping I would not speak to him. Although I had seen him actively betting earlier, he feigned surprise and explained that he was only in the betting shop in order to kill time while waiting for a doctor's appointment. He pointed to his watch anxiously and ran away at once to avoid further questioning. Fieldwork consistently revealed uncomfortable moments when people's ideals about what constituted productive risk taking conflicted with their everyday realities. The ambivalence of risk taking is at the centre of this discomfort, as I will show in the next story about Mr Yu, a Chinese Malaysian in his 50s whom I met in one of London's casinos. Mr Yu told me:

'I went to primary school, but I don't know anything, I don't know English, I don't even know our official language, the Malay. One day a Malaysian official, working for the Malay government, asked me *'Hey, even you can't read Malay, can't understand Malay, why you can business?'* I said:¹³⁹ I don't need to know, I know how to do it that's good enough, all of us Chinese are the same. You can see us all over the city we're all the same; all the Chinese are doing business, legal or illegal, it doesn't matter, all of it is done by Chinese.'

This extract from my discussion with Mr Yu communicates a general belief, among Chinese people in the UK, the British population and beyond, that Chinese people are naturally good entrepreneurs. The fast pace of China's economic development, the subject of continuous interest, repeatedly discussed in the news, has enhanced this stereotype (see Chapter 1). Before China and its population get praised for their

139 The text in italic was originally said in English.

economic growth, Chinese people who settled through different waves of migration all over the world, especially in South-East Asia where they set precedents, already incarnated the face of economic progress (Granovetter 1995, Lim 1983, Mackie 1992, Skinner 1968). Everywhere they went, Chinese migrants affirmed themselves to be shrewd entrepreneurs by making use of economic opportunities at their disposal in their new places of residence, regardless of how restricted resources were (Pan 1990). In South-East Asia, their economic success often surpassed that of the indigenous population (Mackie 1992), which resulted in discriminatory policies and in some cases¹⁴⁰ the need to leave a place (Pan 1990). A widespread and visual presence of Chinese migrants in all sorts of family businesses abroad, coupled with the telling of extraordinary success stories of individuals and their families starting from nothing and ending up possessing business empires (Mackie 1992, Ong 1997, Pan 1990, Pieke 1999), has supported the idea that Chinese people have a natural ability to make money, rooted in their unique 'culture' or background.

Discourses about Chinese people in the UK are no exception. A number of official reports reproduce this stereotype: the Chinese are a successful migrant group, whose entrepreneurial skills have been affirmed in the catering industry: they do not draw on resources from the welfare system (Chan 2005, Chan, Cole & Bowpitt 2007), they are hard working, they do not create trouble within society, they contribute to Britain's wealth. The Chinese are acclaimed as a model minority according to those criteria.

'[Chinese people in Britain] are regarded, rightly, as hard-working and law-abiding. They have rarely made complaints about any aspect of their lives in Britain, and have made few calls on social services or other forms of assistance (...). (...). Many Chinese have prospered in Britain, and the expansion of the Chinese catering trade is testimony to the enterprise and hard work of the community. They have an impressive capacity for self-help.' (House of Commons 1985: vii)

What this official discourse does not say is that doing business was not really a choice. In Britain, the narratives of economic success are tools of self-governance, and the entrepreneur is a model for good citizenship. In that sense, the predominance of entrepreneurial activities among Chinese in the UK is a response to the neo-liberal state's expectations that its minorities need to be self-sufficient and responsible for their

¹⁴⁰ For example Vietnam and Indonesia.

own welfare within its boundaries (see Lem 2008 for a similar argument in France). In that context, the narrative of success is not neutral and its positive connotation must be read more critically against the historical, political and economic context of the UK to which Chinese migrants had to adapt.

In the 19th century when Chinese migrants first arrived in Britain through the docks in Liverpool, opportunities to work and trade were rather meagre, and become even more sparse with growing racism from white workers. Chinese migrants were forced to retreat to the few economic opportunities disregarded by the rest of the population due to poor working conditions and low social status. Stigmatised as women's work and vulnerable to aggressive competition, laundering was the only trade they managed to develop (Benton & Gomez 2008: 93). The shift to the catering business results from the same need to adapt to similar constraints (lack of English, racism) and to avoid direct competition with British workers (Luk 2009). As Mr Wang expresses, for him, the choice to enter the catering industry was hardly a choice in comparison to the prospects that their children who can go to university now have.

'I can't choose. What can I do? What industry can I choose, except the restaurant? Ok. What can I do? I didn't know. You can't work in an office, you can't work in finance, because you haven't got the experience, you haven't got a certificate. You can't choose another job, you must stay in this catering industry. So you must face yourself, so you must work hard and then, enjoy your job. But younger people can now choose their jobs.'

It was the same for Mr Chen. He engaged in the catering industry as a businessman because that is all that he knew. Doing business was not about being innovative, it was just a matter of 'copying'. Mr Chen, who moved to the UK in his teens, did not go to school when he arrived and went straight to work for his uncle. Then, he slowly worked his way up.

'I work in my uncle's restaurant for approximately... for two years. And I left his restaurant to look for a better pay. I was recommended by a friend to another restaurant. So I started another new career life. After about one year, I think, I have a thought: while I work for some people I want to try to make my own business. It's on my mind, so... I try to keep copying people, copy, how to run a restaurant. Actually I don't know how to do it but I just want to copy. Copy people.'

Because it was profitable and did not place Chinese workers in competition with others, the Chinese catering industry took off. Like Mr Chen many others followed suit, opened

their own restaurants or takeaways, and often, in the face of this harsh competition in the same business, have to disperse to new locations where no Chinese restaurant or takeaway had yet settled. Having thrived, the Chinese catering industry is now in crisis with British Born Chinese disregarding it for more promising careers in other sectors and employers finding it hard to hire new employees under new immigration legislation.¹⁴¹ The happy beginnings of the catering industry boom in the 70s are over and although some are still taking their chance in this field, many are now venturing into business opportunities elsewhere. Thomas, after years of running a Chinese restaurant in Chinatown and a bankruptcy, has finally opted for the option of owning a café or ‘greasy spoon’ in Kentish Town.

‘In the streets, there is, it seems, so many Chinese restaurants, why would you want to open another one? I’m saying, you’d better use your judgment, I don’t believe we should set up traditional Chinese restaurant anymore, there are too many of them already!’

The predominance of Chinese people working in the catering industry in the UK is now no longer true,¹⁴² although according to Benton and Gomez, until recently those in the business had a rather risk averse attitude and would rarely innovate to other fields, an attitude which is understandable when one chooses a particular business for lack of alternatives. The situation is nevertheless changing. The UK is now attracting a new kind of Chinese entrepreneur with more capital to invest and coming from a variety of new backgrounds (Benton & Gomez 2008: 139-142).¹⁴³ This suggests that Ong’s (1998)

141 During my fieldwork a campaign was taking place for the recognition of Chinese cook as a ‘skilled’ job in order for employers to be able to obtain visas for new employees to come over to do the job. The campaign was a joint endeavour with other affected ethnic groups. Because British Born Chinese are often not interested in working in the catering industry and because legally expatriating a Chinese person to do the job has now become extremely difficult, there is a need to fill vacancies. Chinese students who can work up to 20 hours a week with their visa and Chinese Malaysian who came with a Commonwealth visa with the right to work in the UK for two years are providing a temporary workforce but not a long term solution. Chinese migrants already present in the country and without the right papers were used, until recently, to fill this demand. However, recent legislation restricts this by giving heavy fines to any employer who hires anyone without the right to work in the UK. On the day the law (sections 15 to 26 of the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality 2006) took effect, on 29 February 2008, Peng, a Chinese Malaysian in his 30s, lost his job in the restaurant he was working for in Chinatown. So did many of his friends. See ‘Chinese restaurants ‘threatened’’, *BBC News*, 3 March 2008; <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/london/7275396.stm> and House of Commons. 2009. Thirteenth Report from the Home Affairs Committee, Session 2008-2009. *Managing Migration: The Points Based System*, sections 170-192, London: HSMO; www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmhaff/217/21714.htm.

142 Chinese migrants and British Born Chinese can be found in other occupations, such as law, accountancy, banking insurance, finance, computing, medicine, education, architecture, engineering, real estate, leisure, farming, pharmacy and service firms (Benton & Gomez 2008: 138-139).

143 The Chinese Entrepreneurs Global, a London-based international organization, is a typical product of this new social dynamic in the UK. According to the home webpage (which can be found at www.ceglobal.org/about.html), ‘Chinese Entrepreneurs Global

description of the ‘flexible citizenship’ among Chinese overseas from the Asia-Pacific region in search of economic opportunities elsewhere is also relevant to the UK.

With the changes in Chinese migration to the UK (see Chapter 2) and in the context of global migration (Pieke 2007), the British State has changed its immigration legislation to facilitate access for wealthy investors and skilful individuals while getting tougher on ‘undesirable’ migration which is pushed to the margins of society and/or out of the country. It creates two types of migrant, the ‘bad’ and the ‘good’ one with no place for in-between; an individual can only be one or the other: illegal or legal, unskilled or skilled, undesirable or desirable, failure or success. This, in turn, exacerbates divisions among Chinese people in the UK with the visibility of illegal migration on the news tarnishing and challenging the image of success acquired by the older Chinese population. In the meantime, a ‘new breed of Chinese entrepreneurs’ emerges, of a more global nature (Wong 2008, Yeung 2008) that Western nations are keen to attract to their shores.

‘In the recent decade, North America and Australia have suddenly come to welcome Chinese people because they are viewed as agents who accumulate capital. They have come to represent the new global entrepreneur subject, the kind of person who is productive and self-reliant and wealth-making.’ (Ong 2005: 21)

This new breed of Chinese entrepreneur is to be distinguished from the more traditional image of the Chinese restaurateur in the UK. In the next section, I demonstrate how Chinese entrepreneurs now embody a narrative of modernity and progress.

This hero, the entrepreneur: a story of shared modernity

Yahui, daughter of two business people from Beijing, once met the ‘richest man in China’ (or at least who she considers to be the richest man in China). Despite coming from a wealthy background and having a good job in the City, her encounter with this man left a strong impression. When I asked her what she thinks makes a good

(CE Global) is a non-profit organization formed to provide a platform for young Chinese entrepreneurs (or entrepreneurs who have a China focus) to share entrepreneurial ideas/information and experience worldwide. It aims to promote entrepreneurship within the Chinese community in a global context. In addition, it aims to maximize the success rate of new business startups and to inspire young, professional Chinese to be entrepreneurial and enterprising.’

entrepreneur, she does not talk about her parents as role models or about her experience of setting up a bookshop at seventeen. Rather, she immediately begins to tell the story of the 'richest man in China':

'I know the richest man in China. I learnt a lot from him, he is a friend of my dad. (...) He was selling things like electronics, TV, radio... in early 80s. He was only 17 when he started the business. He didn't really have a suit. There were two of them, his friends... They were three people actually, they lived together. And they only had one suit. So, he... one of them, when going out for dinner or a meeting with people, would just wear that suit, three people wore the same suit. And he worked really hard. And then, he just expanded the business, to like... a different branch in early 90s and then grow, grow, grow. Now he is the richest man.'

Listening to this guy's story and incredible journey to success was for her an opportunity to learn how to be an entrepreneur. It taught her that what is important is to be hard working, make the right decisions at the right time, always keep learning, informing yourself and not being scared of taking risks.

'At that time electronic things... although not many people had money in early 80s, later on people actually earned a lot more money in China. When that happened he started to really sell really fast. The time is actually really right for him, for his business. That's when the technology is becoming a huge thing in 90s, late 90s, early 2000. And then he starts to employ people doing programming. At that time, he didn't even know what is programming, like 1995. He doesn't even know what is internet, but he employs people to actually work on webpages, internet... So he basically, he just... if he hears something he never really heard of, he will learn, he will buy books, read all the books and see if actually these things can be applied to his business. So he is like, he really absorbs all the information and then, you can decide which way is better for you. This is what a good entrepreneur should do. Just gathering all the resources and then use as many as possible to achieve your goal. And also, taking risks, yeah, I would say, he took risks.'

Here the entrepreneur is the man that made it, who achieved his goal on a linear progression and who showed that his visionary project was the right one. In this narrative the entrepreneur is idealised, he becomes a hero and a model to follow. He is the personification of success and individualism, someone who has pursued his goal, put it into action, and was right to, because he became rich. Here the term 'entrepreneur' is positively connoted, in the sense that it only highlights the 'hero *en puissance*', the potential to be a winner in every one of us. Such narrated stories of the

entrepreneur hide a darker reality: they focus on the few who made it, but remain silent regarding the majority who did not.

The retelling of a success story must be differentiated in that sense from the first account. The storyteller 'add[s] form or linearity to the meaningless chaos of the disconnected events making up the 'flow' of everyday lived experience' (Osella & Osella 2006: 572). Obviously, presenting oneself to be successful or just to be an entrepreneur has the intention of portraying oneself in a good light, and inevitably reconstructs past events or present circumstances in a neat and coherent structure reproducing the idea that we all advance towards the same objective and within the same linear time (see Chapter 3). Hart recalls how one of his informants Atibila presented himself as a modern and rational man, an entrepreneur, rather than emphasise his involvement with the life and tradition of his local community (2000: 103-4). In the case of the person who retells a success story the focus shifts from the past to the future. In retelling the story of the richest man in China, Yahui is responding to social expectations of what is appropriate to aspire to; she is internalising the story of modernity in her own words. This narrative of success stories, beyond borders and local nuances, tells a unified and global story, that of capitalism (Osella & Osella 2006). It speaks to most of us. In the steps of Osella & Osella, I argue that stories of the hero-entrepreneur as well as narratives of modernity in the UK, in China or other countries where Chinese migrants come from, 'occupy the same analytical space, contrary to moves to theorise multiple modernities' (2006: 569).

In practice, these discourses are inseparable from the growing economic and political power of China and the development of an elite Chinese group in the UK. In that context, discourses about Chineseness, Chinese culture and patriotism present themselves as an alternative and distinct modernity to that of the West (Ong & Nonini 1997). The website of a network of Chinese professionals working in the City is eloquent in that respect:

'To certain extent, friction of some kind culturally and ideologically always arises when East meets the West, especially for us, members of [Association of Chinese Financial Professionals in UK] ACfPU. At both professional and educational level, we have encountered all sorts of differences and confrontations in such areas as negotiations, meetings, day-to-day management styles, decision-making processes, and even everyday ways of thinking.

This then brought to the creation of a new set of cultural values shared by [Association of Chinese Financial Professionals in UK (ACfPU)] members - we are fundamentally Chinese. And we tend to intertwine our own destinies with the future of China. (...)'

British Born Chinese (BBCs) and Chinese individuals who grew up in China are now also taking advantage of this positive representation of Chinese identity for their own personal development. Max, for example, who moved from Mainland China to the UK at a young age, associates the economic success of China with his own ambitions:

'I think the reason is that I want to think I belong to something, and reading about China makes me feel... like I belong to something that is largely progressing. Because of the Chinese economy and things, I feel like, it's almost a parallel to my life, perhaps... getting somewhere.'

It is also not rare to see BBCs moving to Hong Kong or Mainland China for better job opportunities (see Chapter 2).

The problem with this idealisation of the entrepreneur and his ability to reach success is that it narrows down our understanding of just how and in what ways, an entrepreneur is a hero of capitalism. In narratives of success, the actions of the entrepreneur are recalled retrospectively and made meaningful in light of the achievement, but little attention is given to what an entrepreneur actually does. As noted by Hart (1975, 2000) the term 'entrepreneur' takes on different meanings depending on who uses it, and although popular definitions of the entrepreneur tend to focus on economic leadership, there is no academic consensus on what an entrepreneur is. Hébert and Link (1989) present a good recapitulation of the way the term 'entrepreneur' evolved historically and has been interpreted differently through economic theories as a way to highlight the importance of certain economic behaviours: the entrepreneur makes decisions under uncertainty, innovates, redresses economic disequilibrium or grabs profitable opportunities in the market. All definitions implicitly or explicitly suggest, in line with Mises (1949: 253), that all human action is entrepreneurial. In that respect, what is interesting in the entrepreneur is not so much his/her characteristics but the actions that s/he carries out and the effects of his/her actions on the economy. Following Barth (1963), Belshaw (1965), Stewart (1991) and Hart's (2000) comments on the matter I would argue that it is less useful to understand the entrepreneur as a person or a role, status or a class but more as one aspect of an economic role, that is to say the actions of human agents towards the aim of accumulating money. In what follows I illustrate this point with the

case of Max, a 25 year old Chinese man who is aiming to be a successful entrepreneur in the next few years.

The social life of risk: becoming through action

At the age of 10, following the divorce of his parents, Max came to the UK with his mother. Excitement at leaving his hometown in Mainland China quickly turned into bitterness: the area was rough, it took time to master English and there were not many Chinese around; all this made him an easy target for bullying. He could not help but resent his mum for taking him away from China and felt jealous of his cousins who remained there. Now that he is in his mid 20s, he can see that being Chinese in the UK has its advantages.

‘I think I’m at least 70% Chinese, 30% British, but it really depends on what we’re talking about, it varies. When I’m in China I feel more British. In China it’s just the norm being Chinese, so I don’t feel very special. To be Chinese in China doesn’t really mean anything.’

For him, being Chinese also resonates with his entrepreneurial ambitions.¹⁴⁴ Max has a plan that will soon make him earn enough money not to have to work anymore. In the meantime, he has to work hard to get there. While doing some freelancing to pay the bills and support his son who lives with his ex-partner, a young British girl, Max is also working on his own project, a marketing software program for online advertising.

Max: ‘I plan to make about £5,000 to £10,000 a month very quickly maybe within a year, by which time I figure I maybe have to work maybe a day a week, and either employ other people... or just have the system kind of do my work... and by that time because it’s online and I can go anywhere and still make that money, so I probably want to be a student for a few years and decide what I want to do with my life.’

Claire: ‘So you might be a student again?’

Max: ‘No, as in the sense just not really... kind of carefree....’

Claire: ‘Oh I see, kind of the lifestyle’

Max: ‘Yeah, yeah. ‘

Claire: ‘So when do you think that would happen?’

¹⁴⁴ See previous section.

Max: 'By the end of next year.'

Claire: 'Wah, that quickly?'

Max: 'I hope so, I've been saying this for a while though. When I was in China I thought I'll be rich by August that year 2007. When I came back I thought I'll be rich by December 2007 and now it's 2008.'

Claire: 'I guess it takes time...'

Max: 'Yes it does. At one point I thought I had finished, I thought I was almost there. This was in the end of September 2007 and I'd finished one version of my software programme, which later I found out wasn't as good. But at that time I thought I'd finished it and I had this incredible feeling, it felt like I was flying. But later it turned out that what I had done was quite limited so I wanted to rewrite it, I thought it would take two months but it's taking a lot longer.'

When I first met Max he had recently bet £100 with his ex-boss that he would make £5000 from his programming tool by the end of the year. Max can see now that he will probably lose the bet; the fact that he might lose his pride, not the money, is, nevertheless, very motivating. Despite the fact that his project is taking longer than he planned, Max is still hopeful. He is also really happy to see that someone like his ex-boss or a millionaire he talked with once recognise in him the vision of an entrepreneur, because his family and friends do not really get it. His best friend, a British born Iranian, does not believe he will earn that much money with his marketing tools, he thinks if it happens 'it will just be luck'.

'Because he doesn't see me putting all these efforts, he just sees me if it happens, just to him it seems very easy.'

Contrary to the earlier story of the richest man in China told by Yahui, Max has not achieved anything yet. This makes it hard for his friend to take him seriously. On the other side, Max's frustration is understandable: how can his efforts be equated with luck? His actions are already meaningful to him.

Max's case takes us back to the roots of the meaning of the term 'entrepreneur', that is to say 'to undertake'. In the definition the accent is on the ability to begin an action in order to achieve a goal, this is what matters to Max.¹⁴⁵ This contrasts to the present

¹⁴⁵ Interestingly the etymology of the verb 'entreprendre', which 'entrepreneur' is derived from, is made of the two latin words *inter* (entre-) which when attached to the verb 'prendre' means an action which is only half done, and *prendre* (prendre), which means to grasp (an action generally associated with latin cognates about war, fishing and hunting). In that respect, entrepreneur

discourse of the entrepreneur as an achiever, someone that has reached the goal he fixed himself. Entrepreneurs are only recognised when they concretise their project, when their foresight is fulfilled in their economic success. This means that ‘entrepreneurship’ equates economic success and that the *process* of making choices and taking actions in the present is overlooked.

As much as Max describes his entrepreneurial endeavours as a worthwhile combination of trying, learning and working, he will only be recognised as a ‘winner’ if he embodies this status ultimately. By emphasising the end point of entrepreneurs as a final state, those who may fail along the way are inevitably excluded. The dominant narrative of success and failure overlooks an important dimension: the entrepreneur already affects the world and shapes who he or she is by taking action. In that sense, being an entrepreneur, that is to say ‘undertake’ (*entreprendre*), is better understood as a risk-taking activity. It is the ability to take risks that the entrepreneur and the gambler share. My point is not to argue that doing business is the same as gambling but to rehabilitate the similarities they share in order to break away from the model of economic rationality which strategically keeps them apart.¹⁴⁶ At this juncture, my work rejoins aspects of Zaloom’s analysis of stock market traders in Chicago. Zaloom argues that risk is socially productive through the example of trading which offers the ‘ever-present possibility of failure’ (2004: 381) and where ‘achievement (...) must be proven over and over with each trade’ (2004: 380). Like trading, I argue that both entrepreneurship and gambling are intensely identity forming activities. In the rest of the chapter, I pursue this argument further by looking at migration as a form of risk-taking activity and how the experience of migrating is intrinsically connected to an involvement in business or gambling at the individual level. Like Max who is hoping that this new software will make him rich, Chinese migrants to the UK are hoping that by migrating to the UK they will be able to get rich quicker. This does not mean that they are passively embracing the narrative of modernity as progress. On the contrary, by

originally describes an intention to obtain which is not yet accomplished. (Petit Robert, Dictionnaire alphabétique et Analogique de la Langue Française, 2010)

146 Chapter 6 which articulates the difference between risk and uncertainty provides elements of response as to how casino gambling differs from other risk-taking activities. So does Hart’s chapter, ‘The personal face of capitalism: entrepreneurs’, as for example with his description of social relationships among Frafra entrepreneurs: ‘personal relationships are created over time; so that exchange in Nima was largely a learning process. People found out by trial and error what worked for them; and the failure rate was extremely high.’ (2000: 112).

migrating and taking risks Chinese migrants are refusing to be left behind, to be those who are considered failures because they have not or will never reach success. In that respect, entrepreneurs, migrants and gamblers share the same desire to construct themselves as particular kinds of people.

Moving away, up and forward or refusing to be stuck behind

‘Migration is what you do *when the opportunity arises*,
not what you do for lack of opportunity’

James Fenton (1992, original emphasis)

Yuan Ting is a repentant gambler who successfully finished a counselling session with the Chinese Mental Health Association. Yuan Ting, a young Fujianese who came on a student visa, that he has now overstayed, with the sole intention to make some money to help his family back home, had badly disappointed them by not only spending away the money he earned and should have sent them but by asking his family to send him some money to pay back his debts. Now that he has given up gambling he is hoping to catch up with the time he has wasted, gambling it away. He has nearly finished paying back his debts and he is hoping to be able in a few months time to regularly send money back home again. As I ask him what makes, to his view, a person successful, he explains to me that he has now understood that success is to keep trying despite failure, but when he was a gambler he just wanted to get there quickly. Why would he not? Making quick money meant going back home sooner.

‘Before that I didn’t think the same, the person I was before that, just wanted to use the shortest time possible to do things. If other people used two days, I would rack my brains to find a way, I will go and find a way to do it in a day only. It seems that I thought I was better than other people, that I was more clever than them, that’s what I thought. But I was wrong, I discovered that I was wrong. Actually, the truth is that, I understood that myself, I thought I was quite clever, but I have no perseverance, what I mean is that I do not try hard enough. I do half of the things (I start), after I’ve done half of it, I will throw it away, I would not finish it. When I first started something I will be very diligent, I will put a lot of efforts into it, but once arrived halfway, or once I’ve done half of it, I wouldn’t be so hard working anymore, I would leave things unfinished. It seems that I didn’t have the will to carry on. That’s why, at that time, I didn’t think in the same way, I just thought, *I want those things to happen faster.*’

His entrepreneurial ambition of a quick success has been shaken by the harsh reality that money does not flow in the West. Yuan Ting now regrets he came to the UK in the first place. He is obviously not enjoying his time here, and he knows, even though he does not say too much, that it may take him years to get the appropriate amount of money before he can go back home, especially in these times of recession. Although it turned out to be a bad idea which put him in an even worse position, gambling came up as a solution to speed up the process of waiting while providing the instant satisfaction of success. Before looking at what happens when migrants arrive to the UK, and how the roles of gambler, entrepreneur and migrant are all realigned under particular individual circumstances like in the case of Yuan Ting, I think it is important to take a look at the project that Chinese migrants have in mind when they come to the UK. This will help to understand how this initial project is shuffled around through the movement of migration.

For most of the Chinese migrants I encountered in London, migration starts as a project, a preliminary phase that can be compared to the beginning of one individual's life where everything still has to be written. Many of them are or were young, in their 20s, early 30s at the time of migration, or came at a middle age crisis.¹⁴⁷ As a migrant-to-be they first undertake to migrate by imagining a more promising place than the one where they come from, where new opportunities, nonexistent or harder to access at home, become possible. These other places might be or might not be real, the point is that the act of migrating starts with imagining a place with new possibilities for the future in order to grab them. Migration is a forward-looking attitude which in that sense, requires some risky, and to some extent entrepreneurial, undertakings. Beyond this, why and how Chinese people have migrated is as diversified as the backgrounds of the migrants composing the Chinese population of Britain. Whilst it is true that the majority mainly comes from Mainland China, it is still not rare to meet Chinese individuals coming from other countries (the United States, Panama, Vietnam, Malaysia, France, Singapore, Taiwan, Germany, New Zealand, Mauritius...),¹⁴⁸ where they have grown up or lived for a few years. In addition, their economic and social situations vary greatly, coming

147 A small minority of Chinese migrants come to the UK at retirement age. They are usually brought by one of their children to come and live with his/her family in the UK.

148 According to Poston & Yu (1990) data gathered from a diversity of sources (Taiwan statistics, national censuses of various countries of the world; recent data and publications from the People's Republic of China) shows that between 1940s and 1980s, Chinese people were present in more than 130 countries on the six continents.

from poor to very wealthy families. And finally, not all Chinese migrants in London see migration as a means of change in their lives. Some are simply following family members they are supporting, such as Ahmei financing her daughter's studies. Others are being supported by the family members they are following, as with Mr Long in his 70s who was brought over from Mainland China by his son to retire (see Chapter 2). Migration is not an isolated individual act, but involves significant others. Parents eager for their offspring to move up socially, or in need of care in their old age, families to feed, and children's university fees to pay are some of the most common reasons. Beyond the diversity of individual stories, a common drive for social mobility and betterment can be noted (Pieke 1999: 16).

To understand the forward-looking attitude of Chinese migration it is crucial to take a look at the context at the point of departure. China, the country where an increasing majority of the Chinese migrants to the UK is from (see Chapter 2), is undergoing rapid economic development which has widened social inequalities. Nobody wants to be part of those left behind. Those who are unable to migrate know too well what it is like since they are constantly reminded of their lack of fortune by the display of wealth that families of migrant workers can dispose of. In an emigrant village of the Fuzhou countryside where many Chinese migrants come from, Chu (2006) looks at how the migration of others is experienced as a denigration of their own living conditions by those who remained behind. With the wealth brought back by migrant workers, villagers witness a lavish, competitive, and unproductive display of wealth in the renovation of temples and the construction of luxurious houses with several storeys that are left vacant. The landscape of everyday life is changing except for the living conditions of those who have not been anywhere else. It is not that people are poorer in China, they are actually better off than they were before, it is that people *feel* poorer (Li 1999). The presence of individuals who are making money, and lots of it, is making others feel a sense of lack (1999), which in turn conducts to feelings of envy and 'red-eye' (Zhang 2010). In that context, the underlying assumption that '[w]ealth is 'out there' and needs to be seized' (Liu 1997: 102) is being reinforced, and other places, like cities on the East coast of China (Zhang 2001) or the West, are imagined as holding the secret of wealth.

Not everyone can hope for the opportunity to migrate and those who can do not have equal chances of success. Social mobility via migration takes place in a two-way

system. For many, migrating to big Chinese cities or abroad are the only avenues they have to move up socially since there are no opportunities available in their home place (Pieke 1999). In the 1940s Fei was already describing how wealth accumulation in rural China was a slow process which meant that villagers had to leave the village and/or find activities other than agriculture.

‘In a village where the farms are small and wealth is accumulated slowly, there are very few chances for a landless man to become a landowner or for a petty owner to become a large landowner. It takes generations to climb the ladder of success simply by frugality (...). (...) To become rich one must leave agriculture – this is generally true throughout rural China. (...). *If the people of Yuts’un wish to become rich, the only thing for them to do is to leave the village. Outside there are certain opportunities open to them.*’ (Fei 1998 [1949]: 277, emphasis added)

In the context of global capitalism, Chinese migration is going further and faster (Liu 1997). Moving abroad to a country with a strong economy is a top choice since a minimum, or below minimum, wage can be turned into wealth back home. The UK is a prime location in that respect. The money to be earned here, even at a rate that most British citizens would find unacceptable, is not only multiplied ten times more once converted in *Renminbi* (RMB)¹⁴⁹ but represents attractive wealth that would be very hard and lengthy, or even impossible, to acquire at home. By moving geographically, Chinese migrants can change their destiny and fast forward their dream of moving up. For them, moving to the West is about ‘getting rich quickly’ (Li 1999). That is how Yuan Ting, whom I mentioned earlier explains his migration to the UK:

‘At a very young age, my family was rather poor, my parents were going through a lot of hardship and were rather tired, plus we were three kids at home, my little brother, my little sister and me. So I knew from an early age that it would be very difficult, everyone at home was exhausted. I knew very early, my parents were going through lots of hardship, what is more each of us... what’s more there are many of us over there and most want to leave the country to earn some money. It’s because in China the salaries are too low, that’s why we all have to leave the country, because the salaries abroad are so many times more, ten times more, better than in China, that’s why we all want to go abroad, go out of China.’

¹⁴⁹ Referred to as RMB in the text from this point on.

His situation is not very different from many of the Chinese Malaysian I also encountered in the field. As one of them bluntly stated one day: 'The only good thing about the UK is the pound'. The salaries they earn here also mean fortune back home in Malaysian ringgit. However, Fujianese come from backgrounds even poorer than them and have, as such, even less to lose. They find it hard to compete with them on the job market since they are ready to accept much cheaper salaries as one of my informant Mr Yu comments:

'If you don't earn much, you don't worry, the most important thing is that you've got a job, that's why us, Chinese Malaysian we lose against Fujianese. Why? For example, a very simple matter, one restaurant is looking for someone to fill a position in the kitchen, as a cook, one week £150, it's not much. Do you know how much Fujianese are ready to go for? They speak to the boss and they say to him: don't you want to take me on for £100 a week? Of course the boss takes him, it's only £100, while us Malaysian we go for £200, who do you take? Of course the Fujianese.'

Although it is not an option for everyone, another way to achieve social mobility in China is through education (Fong 2004, 2007). Moving up in the educational system actually means physically moving through a hierarchy of geographical spaces (Johnston 2009) where going to study abroad is the pinnacle. Studying in the West is seen as a great chance to enhance one's future to the point where Chinese students have become the most important international student population in the world, with 460,000 of them in 103 countries in 2002 (Wei 2005: 430). In the UK itself, the Chinese student population has grown from 2883 in 1997 to 47740 in 2005 (2005: 431). Once they graduate, Chinese students often stay to complete their degree with work experience in the UK and sometimes also in order to get a British residency permit which allows them even greater mobility,¹⁵⁰ and ultimately will increase their value on the job market. Pearl, already a young professional in the field of media in Shanghai came to the UK with the intention to boost her career, to move up quickly.

'It was like a sort of a break in my life, I wanted to have a new life and I wanted to study, have a master degree. It was sort of the middle of my career, and... there is not much

150 Claiming British citizenship (see also Ahmei's daughter case in Chapter 2) illustrates the phenomenon of 'flexible citizenship' that Ong (1998) describes to be characteristic of certain Chinese migrants who manipulate the immigration rules in order to benefit from the economic advantages that mobility across different nation-states offers them.

progression, that time. So, I wanted to have a new life, completely change environment, so I came to England...'

Even if studying abroad is more desirable than studying in China, not all places abroad are considered to offer equal opportunities of social mobility. Li, in an article about Chinese students in the Netherlands, explains how the Netherlands is rarely their first choice and is not as prestigious as going to the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom or France (2002: 180). But if students choose to go there it is often because it is cheaper than those other Western countries that they cannot afford.

Migration is a displacement in space with the objective to move forward in time to an imagined future which cannot be reached, or much more slowly, by staying back home. In that sense, by moving away migrants are hoping to create opportunities which are nonexistent or more limited where they are from. Not that they can be sure that the future will unfold as desired but this is part of the risks they have to take. The future is uncertain, they are speculating on it. Chinese migrants do not blindly believe that they can make their dream of riches come true. As Chu (2004) demonstrates in her ethnography of Chinese migration at the point of departure, Fujianese migrants are fully aware of the difficult conditions that wait for them overseas. News of tragedies like Morecambe Bay or the Chinese stowaways asphyxiated in a lorry on their way to the UK travel fast to China. Their desire to migrate abroad must not be reduced to mere rational calculation towards a reward but is better understood as the ability to take risks and act upon a desire to become a certain kind of person.

Re-interpreting failure

Access to opportunities is not equal in migration since the 'picture is less, [as argued by Harvey (1989)], of any simple acceleration in the pace of life or experience of spatial 'collapse' than of a far more complex restructuring in the nature and experience of time and space' (Thrift & May 2001:10). Great social inequalities exist regarding the way movements in time and space are experienced by Chinese people in London. Time does not just accelerate, it also slows down, space does not just collapse it also expands, and there is not just one movement but several, going in different directions and rhythms.

Chinese migrants who have arrived in London in the hope of moving up face great inequalities, some struggle to eke out a living in a very competitive job market while others have good chances of success thanks to their social and economic capital. In the first scenario, they find themselves at the low end of the job market where they fill the need for cheap and disposable manpower, now extended well beyond the Chinese ethnic enclave. The tragic event of Chinese cocklers drowning on Morecambe Bay reflects the increasingly harrowing conditions they face. In her book *Chinese Whispers*, the reporter Hsia-Hung Pai (2008) originally from Taiwan, who went undercover as a status-less migrant to document their life conditions, describes how tougher legislation combined with economic needs to supply production have meant that those migrants have become an easy prey for exploitation. Although Pai's undercover research is fairly recent (it took place during 2004 and 2007), the situation is still worsening. Since that time, harsher immigration legislation has come into effect and the economic crisis is hitting hard.¹⁵¹ The irony is that, for those who have remained behind, migrants in the UK are in a 'desirable' place where opportunities are better and faster. In reality many find themselves at the margins of British society, very often occupying jobs disregarded by British citizens and offered below minimum wage salaries (Pai 2008). The dream they have hoped for has not been realised.

'The idea of coming to London had filled them with a sense of moving up in the world, of moving on. The reality for many is that they find their status drops.' (Pharoah et al. 2009: 37)

For them, time in the UK is not going as fast as they had hoped. They have not been able to catch the fast train of 'time-space compression'. Contrary to the argument made by Harvey (1989) that 'there is a speed-up and acceleration in the pace of economic processes and, hence, in social life' (1989: 230), for those Chinese migrants migration has not annihilated space through time and life in the UK is still moving too slowly, if advancing at all. Many of those migrants, like in the case of Yuan Ting, realise after a while being in the UK that it will take them much longer than expected to accumulate the necessary amount of money to go back home. In her book, Pai reports the disillusion reached by one Chinese worker she encountered.

151 In Pai's (2008) description of Chinese DVD sellers dating from 2005, the price of a DVD was £3; four years later it has dropped to £2 in London.

‘I was planning to return home after two to three years of working in England’, he told me, ‘but it hasn’t worked out that way. Money’s harder to earn than I’d expected, and I’m having to stay longer. I find waiting unbearably frustrating. The hardest thing for me is to be away from my family.’ (2008: 209)

The stories I gathered develop a number of these themes and reveal just how difficult it is to achieve the *status* of entrepreneur, despite undertaking the *actions* thereof. Ying (see Chapter 3) migrated to Europe with the explicit intention of making money. Seven years ago (in 2000), he was smuggled into Germany where he claimed asylum. He was lucky enough to know the smugglers so he got the reduced price of 90,000 RMB (just under £8000) instead of the 100,000 RMB normally required (just under £9000).¹⁵² Once in Germany, he found a job in a Chinese restaurant but he quickly got tired of it since it was far too many hours and not enough salary to his taste. So, he decided to work in a Japanese restaurant where the money was a bit better. He worked there for a few years until he had enough money to start his own restaurant. Smuggled in by some friends, he arrived in London a year ago in the hope of making more business and more money. At the time I met him he had already lost lots of money and it was unclear what kind of business he was really involved in since he was talking about so many different opportunities that he was or had been trying out: beer importation from Germany, leather importation from Italy, clothes selling, DVD selling, catering. The fact was that he was struggling financially, to the point where he had to move from living in his own flat in North London to sharing a small room for £50 a week with three other Chinese restaurant workers in Chinatown. He spent most of his days wandering aimlessly and penniless in the casino. Although Ying had his time of success when he could easily gamble thousands of pounds away at Baccarat, he is now experiencing the misery of not being financially fluent. He is eager though to make some money quickly so he can experience again the freedom to spend it away.

Another informant, Xu, a Cantonese man in his 40s regrets he came to the UK in the first place. Xu reflects on his years in the UK and explains that job opportunities are blocked for him as a Chinese man who cannot speak English. He can only work in a

152 These are prices of approximately 10 years ago and were for Germany. These prices have now increased. Pai refers to the story of one migrant who paid 200,000 RMB (around £15, 400 at the time) to be smuggled into Britain in 2003 (2008: 91-2) . In another story 250,000 RMB (around £22,700) was paid in 2000 (2008: 99). In 2005, the cost was up to 300,000 RMB (2008: 144). Chu refers to an average of \$60,000 (average between £33,000-£42,000 depending on exchange rates) for the cost of smuggling to the United States at the beginning of the millenium (2004: 5).

Chinese restaurant and this means a salary of misery which he refuses to be subjected to anymore. His problem is that he cannot go back to China either: he has been in the UK for too long and he has no money. Xu feels stuck, he has no goal to aim for anymore and he does not feel he has a future anywhere, here or in China, but at least he has a place to sleep and a British passport.

According to the narrative of success, those two cases are obvious stories of ‘failure’, counter-examples of the hero-entrepreneur, those who have tried but who have failed. But as we have seen earlier, this is underestimating the individual’s capacity for action, and by consequence, it is underestimating Chinese migrants’ ability to re-evaluate their initial goals and to find other avenues to become as individuals. As Ventura (1992) narrates in his autobiography of a Filipino migrant in Japan, *Underground in Japan*, Filipinos in a Yokohama slum have diverse reasons for staying there, which are not reducible to their original goals when they came. The very act of migrating is changing original motivations and by the same process how each individual perceives and defines their selves. This point comes across clearly in the story of Yuan Ting mentioned earlier. Yuan Ting became a keen player of roulette, first starting on the electronic machines in the bookies and then going to the casino, he had never played it before and discovered it for the first time in the UK. He quickly got into debt and thanks to a series of counselling sessions he managed to solve his gambling ‘addiction’. Since he has stopped gambling, he also has given up his grandiose dreams of making it big for the more realisable one of a quieter life as a fish farmer back home. For him, despite all the money he had lost gambling he now considers himself to be successful since he has finally overcome his ‘addiction’ for gambling that was dragging him into terrible debts.

‘My fate is very good, that’s because my luck is good, since recently, I think my luck is good. I managed to overcome my difficulties [stopped gambling], I managed to make myself get out of this thing [gambling]. I managed to take control over it and stop it. I believe that if a man behaves in the right manner, a man with good behaviour will be rewarded.’

Two ex-gamblers, Mr Chen and Mr Pan speak of their conversion to Christianity in the same positive terms. It is thanks to God that they overcome their gambling habits and they think of themselves as much better people than when they were dedicated gamblers. Those three ex-gamblers see themselves as winners since every day passes without them relapsing into gambling again. Those three cases show that some Chinese

migrants in the UK adapt to the fact that not everyone can be successful within the terms of the official discourse; they make meaningful lives for themselves beyond the paradigm of success and failure. My three interlocutors are shifting the discourse of success toward their own respective strengths. Giving up gambling is not that easy and Mr Chen and Mr Pan shared their stories of relapse with me. The success that they see in their total abstinence is not definite. Against the dominant trope that there is only one form of possible and desirable success, their ideas of achievement evolve over time and adapt to the reality of their situation.

At the same time as the worsening of living conditions among informal workers, access to economic and social opportunities in the UK is significantly improving for Chinese students, young professionals and businessmen (see Chapter 2). The presence of Chinese graduates in London is particularly felt in the City where they enjoy well-paid positions and the prestige of belonging to an international elite. In the financial services industry before the crisis, Chinese bankers were regarded as ‘rain makers’ by management and colleagues and a highly competitive market for their services had developed (Cassidy pers. comm., 28 February 2010). In that context, networking groups have been springing up fast. Through the mailing list of one of this group I managed to get in touch with Lewis. Lewis arrived in the UK in the summer 2002 to study a MBA at Oxford that he himself funded by working a few years beforehand in Shanghai’s stock market (as I described in Chapter 2). Lewis is building up his career. He then plans to go back to China where, with his experience, he believes he will be able to get a very good job. He has worked in three different investment banks since his graduation. The most recent is a French investment bank where he is a trader at the commodity trading area on the sale side. In his spare time, Lewis is also a keen gambler, he likes to go to the casino, although he does not go on a regular basis. He also plays poker with friends once a week; it is during one of those poker nights that he met his girlfriend Miriam who also works in financial services (see also Chapter 2). The financial crisis was just beginning as I completed my fieldwork. This new Chinese elite discovered that they were not entirely sheltered from the risk of losing their newly acquired social and economic position. Like everyone else working in the City, members of Chinese young professional networks were affected by the collapse of Lehman Brothers bank and those working there lost their jobs.

At one end of the spectrum are the well-educated, connected and affluent migrants. For them, dreams of success, or at least, goals of achieving a relatively comfortable social situation, are a possible reality. The selves that they project into the future are often rooted in solid social and/or economic capital, or in past educational achievements. The potential of their future is not limited to the UK, can often be cashed in other places in the world, and encourages their feeling of being the emissaries of the next superpower, China. On the other end of the scale are those at the bottom of the job market. In sharp contrast, these migrants are experiencing the tough reality that to make their dream of riches come true they have to endure a lot of hardship, and that despite this, there is no guarantee they will ever get there. For them, time stands still, moves backward or too slowly. Rather than moving forward to a wealthier future, some are stuck, it seems, in a present with little improvement or sometimes worsening from past conditions.

Beyond a linear and steady progression towards success

I have demonstrated that what counts as success or failure is reassessed by individuals in relation to life circumstances and events. Here I will show that success is not a permanent state. Successes and failures can take place interchangeably over the course of one's life challenging the very idea that life unravels in a linear and even temporality for all where one socially moves up gradually toward success. Mr Yu's life story is a good example of how events fluctuate between good and bad times creating the experience of a unique temporality. A Chinese Malaysian in his 50s, Mr Yu, comes from a poor family. When he was a teenager he went to work in a confectionary factory in Singapore where he learnt the job for 20 years. As there was no real possibility for promotion, Mr Yu set up his own confectionary business with his younger brothers back in Malaysia. Quickly, his business became quite successful. After 10 years of being in charge, Mr Yu left the direction of the business to his younger brothers. Unfortunately they liked to gamble and they gambled to the point that in six years the business plummeted dramatically and Mr Yu had to sell it to pay his brothers' gambling debts.

‘I was responsible for 10 years and then I handed over to my younger brothers. I don't really know what really happened, all what I know is that one or two of my brothers gambled. They gambled, bet on horseracing, on football. Then, the business went down.’

Even Mr Yu's retirement scheme in Singapore that he preciously kept for sponsoring his children's studies had to go in the reimbursement of his brothers' gambling debts. When that happened Mr Yu cried a lot; he remained inconsolable for two long years when he sometimes gambled as a way to 'anesthetise' (麻醉 *ma zui*) his mind, till he received a proposition to go to the UK as a 'passer'.¹⁵³

In his situation, going to the UK came up as a good opportunity to catch up what had been lost previously. However, in the UK things turned out to be far more difficult than anticipated. Mr Yu first worked as a doorman in a Chinese brothel where he could not go out and had to work very long hours. After being robbed and threatened by a burglar, he decided to work independently as a 'job-match-maker' helping Chinese workers to find employers. Here again Mr Yu encountered huge difficulties, the workers would not always pay him, and finally, disgusted by the miserable life he had been through in the UK, he decided to go back to Malaysia. In the end, the job situation in the UK was not that much better than the poor prospects which were waiting for him at home.

Each life story develops its own rhythm that has a fraught relationship with the idea of progress envisaged as a linear process from less to more money, status and so on. This also means that the way each of my contributors perceives their achievement is changing over time and takes different meanings depending on which stage of their life they are at. At a young age, they tend to have high confidence and ambition about their future, which directly reflects the high social expectations behind their migration. For those who come to study to the UK, even when it is a financial strain on their family, it is already an achievement in itself since so few actually get a student visa. According to Jennifer, a Media student in her early 20s from Mainland China, only 20-30% of the people who apply for a visa in the UK succeed.¹⁵⁴ Jennifer can still remember the people in the front of her crying at the news that they were refused the opportunity to study in the UK. Being one of those who were actually granted a visa made her feel she was definitely a lucky person. But this successful position in the eyes of many other Chinese left behind in China, is not yet success for Jennifer. For many years, Jennifer has actually hated living here in the UK, it is only since she has been earning 'more

153 A passer is someone that accompanies other individuals to the destination of their migration.

154 The success rate of Chinese student visa application was 30% in 2004. See Curtis, Polly. 2004. 'Visa fraud crackdown hits China's students', *Guardian*, 10 August; www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2004/aug/10/china.overseasstudents.

money to play with', that she gets a taste of what success means for her: independence and freedom to do what she wants while satisfying her parents' expectations. For others, like Yuan Ting, their individual success is also directly linked to their family's financial wellbeing. Now that he has tackled his gambling problem, he is looking forward to finishing the last payment of his gambling debts, so he can start again sending remittance to them. For elderly individuals, the social pressure to become someone is not as relevant anymore; it passes away with age. Success is read through the lives of younger family members. Mrs Wan, an old retired lady brought over by her son to take care of her grandson, can now see success finally emerging in her old days after a hard life as an orphan. Although Mrs Wan lost her parents and was married at a young age without opportunity to study further, she now has reasons to look back positively on her life. Her two children both did very well at school and both have very good jobs. One lives in Japan and the other in London. Both of them are married and have children. The successful life of her children makes her feel she has finally achieved something worthwhile.

It is not always easy to make sense of life fluctuations in the present and signs of one's ability can take time to emerge. For some, like Xu, after years of trying for new opportunities the realisation that no future lies ahead of them can become a harsh reality. Like Berger's (1975) European migrants in the 1970s or some of Day's sex workers in London (2008: 225), Xu who has been living in the UK for 30 years has become very sceptical of the notion of the return, for him there are no more reasons to hope. Ying, in comparison, has not come to this conclusion yet and continues to be hopeful that more opportunities will come his way; he knows it is not impossible since he has already experienced wealth before when he was running a Japanese restaurant. He believes his luck will come back but he does not know when. Facing such an unsatisfactory or uncertain fate, both Xu and Ying find in the activity of gambling a way to experience luck, and this despite the fact that chances of winning are set against the customers in a casino. For Xu, there is indeed no possibility of a better future, but this does not mean that he cannot create his own luck and that is what he does in gambling. For Ying, it is slightly different since doing business and gambling are part of the same movement of taking risks in order to trigger fruitful opportunities. Gambling does not bring more opportunities of success but at least with gambling there is no need to wait to reach an outcome. When winning, the risks taken pay off immediately. This

immediacy contrasts deeply with other life situations when outcomes take time to happen, if they ever do. In gambling, on the contrary, there is no wait to find out what the consequences of our decisions are. Goffman, in *Where The Action Is*, beautifully explains the time advantage of gambling.

‘Once a play is undertaken, its determination, disclosure, and settlement usually follow quickly, often before another bet is made. (...). Everyday life is usually quite different. Certainly the individual makes bets and takes chances in regard to daily living, as when, for example, he decides to take one job instead of another or to move from one [city or country] to another. Further, at certain junctures he may have to make numerous vital decisions at the same time and hence briefly maintain a very high rate of bet-making. But ordinarily the determination phase – the period during which the consequences of his bet are determined – will be long, sometimes extending over decades, followed by disclosure and settlement phases that are themselves lengthy. The distinctive property of games and contests is that once the bet has been made, *outcome is determined and payoff awarded all in the same breath of experience.*’ (1967: 112-113, emphasis added)

This point further develops the argument made in Chapter 3 that winning as an end to reach needs to be balanced against the unique rhythm gamblers perform through their gambling actions. The same may be said of migration where the idea of success as an end to reach is challenged and re-interpreted according to personal circumstances and unfolding events.

Conclusion

The project of migration is founded on the idea that life in the UK is only secondary and instrumental to building a future and better life in the home country. That is how Berger describes the migrant worker in Europe in the 70s, as a prisoner who cannot enjoy the future yet, and probably will never be able to, and lives as such ‘by way of memory and anticipation’ (1975: 178). I have argued that too much focus on the future and the idea of reward makes us forget the importance of taking risks in the present. Speculating on the future is a way to create a sense of being in the present time. Gambling, migration or doing business are all activities which are looking to create opportunities to become where these opportunities do not exist or not in sufficient quantity. In that respect, they

are not exclusive but complementary to each other through the life stories of individuals.

By consequence, this chapter does not really argue that gambling is an escape, a coping mechanism to adversity in migration and business but more that gambling, along with migration and doing business, is a way to add content to their lives, to experience their luck. In that respect, my argument mirrors Zaloom's conclusion about traders' engagement with risk.

‘Actors push the possibility of self-annihilation through economic risk taking. This wagering of the self shows how active engagements of risk do more than challenge the daily experience of routinization and the bureaucracy of modern life. These are high-stakes situations where subjects are made and unmade.’ (2004: 383-384)

After all, in life as in gambling times of winning and losing keep succeeding each other in an incessant movement as described in Chapter 3 and by Hayano observing poker games in California (1982).

‘[N]either monetary gain nor success are permanent; they merely represent the peaks of the upswing in an ongoing series of bell-shaped fluctuations’. (1982: 6)

The specificity of gambling is that they can test their ability to act on the world in a different temporal scale than that of their life rhythm. They do not have to wait for an outcome that might never come. As I have shown migrants' relationships with the future are not equal. While some experience quick ascension to the top and hold elite positions in the City, others are seeing their dream of getting rich coming slower or fading further away. Chinese gamblers' attraction for gambling has to be read in connection to the way each individual experiences time and space outside of the gambling environment. Since these experiences reveal great social inequalities and differences, they also explain different relationships with the activity of gambling as will be explored in more detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

Rethinking the casino space as dynamic

I'm excited; today my friend Zhihong and I have decided to go to the casino for the first time. It's the afternoon. We meet in Chinatown. Convinced it will be easy to find, neither of us looked up the address. What a mistake! We wander the streets aimlessly for a while before following a Chinese Malaysian woman who takes us to a small entrance hidden by scaffolding. On opening the doors, we are taken into a reception area where everyone has to produce credentials to proceed to the gaming floor. We register as members. This doesn't take long. The staff are quite friendly and even joke with Zhihong, conspicuously pregnant, that her baby is starting (to gamble) rather early. In the meantime, my eyes are hypnotised by the ornate red-carpeted stairs that have caught my attention on entering the building. It looks plush and inviting. Here, we are all actors walking up the Cannes festival's stairs. For Zhihong's convenience, we take the lift. An imitation Hellenic marble column ornamentation surrounds its metallic sliding doors on the sides and at the top. We're now about to enter the Parthenon atop the Acropolis of Athens. As we step into the lift, the first impression is already wearing out. This is confirmed as the sliding doors reveal the top floor. A big glass case faces us, full of products (video camera, watch, ipod, XO Hennessy Cognac,¹⁵⁵ Golden Nugget tee-shirt, Golden Nugget key ring...), akin to the prize cabinets of a fairground or a game show. It's like going through a duty free shop before crossing the border to a foreign land. And indeed, we have to pass two revolving doors twice, while the same ornate red carpet guides our steps inside and points the way forward to the gaming floor, zigzagging through the wooden floor of the bar area. The first sight is rather disappointing and does not live up to the promise of the reception. Inside, it's rather small: just one room separated into two areas, and it looks down-market.¹⁵⁶ The first section is no better than any other cheap brightly lit generic bar. It smells of greasy food, ketchup is displayed on all the tables. It's just like a Wetherspoon pub. The people in the room are men, many of them elderly Chinese. The majority are watching football

¹⁵⁵An expensive brand of 'Cognac', which is popular in China and among Chinese people in the UK.

¹⁵⁶Picture 18 gives a small glimpse of the interior design in the bar area.

on the four plasma screens hung near the ceiling right above the border with the casino area; among them an elderly Chinese man is napping, head slightly back, mouth open. Another is separated from the rest in a corner on the opposite side underneath the TV screens, sitting in silence, expressionless. Only the use of garish colours, the excess and the lustre of the interior design remind us that we are in a casino. In accordance with the prevailing hue of the carpet, leathery seats, lampshades and the frames on the wall in the bar are all or partly red, which is matched with a pale yellow backdrop and dark wooden tables, counter and floor. At the edges of the red carpet alley stand three columns of mirror which in conjunction with the mirror panes on the walls intensify the meretricious aspect of the bar. The separation between the bar and the casino is clearly marked by a small wall topped with a banister. Through the gaps between them one can peek through onto the other side. On the floor, the border is also visible: a grey blue background with an eye-catching wavy and spiky cream pattern carpet replaces the red-carpeted corridor interlaced with the wooden floor. Above our heads, the ceiling also changes from a low, pale yellow to golden 3D shaped small grids where video cameras are hanging, one for each gaming table. Pushed to its extreme in the gaming area and awkwardly juxtaposing clashing designs, the decor is at its tackiest and reminds me of a bingo hall or an arcade on a sea resort. Sparkly and roundish chandeliers assembled in rows of small fake crystal pieces and inserted inside rectangular settings reinforce the gaudy style of the casino, as does the brightly lit atmosphere in a room with high ceilings. A vivid red is still present on the wall where the logo of the casino is displayed, but gold is now flashing and decorations are a shade more glaring. Strikingly, framed within full-length wooden panes, wide panels of mirrors are ornamented with a diamond-shaped pattern. In contrast with all this plush exuberance, the people look generic, ordinary and unattractive. Most of the attendees are casually, almost scruffily, dressed, in nondescript clothes predominantly in shades of black, dark brown, grey and dark blue; the kind that is unnoticed in the crowd and that does not play the game of appearances. The high proportion of people of non-white ethnic appearance, among which Chinese stand out as a majority, surprises me. British people are in the minority here. The casino seems strangely more mixed than in the streets, or rather disproportionately mixed. Despite my concerns about being spotted as a researcher, I feel incredibly inconspicuous while in there. Everyone is totally absorbed in the game, the football match or their thoughts. They are all ignoring us, or seem to be.

This first glimpse at one of the three casinos in the vicinity of London's Chinatown that I regularly visited evokes a material environment typical of where many of my encounters with Chinese gamblers took place. As I show in the rest of the chapter, casinos do not quite look like they are imagined. Their disjointed design and atmosphere often creates a sense of seclusion where the external world is pushed away, and give the impression of being out of synch with reality. This is primarily used to entice gamblers, but once in there, they are not just passively using the space. As a matter of fact, the casino and its occupiers have different, and sometimes conflicting, agendas about how and why to use the space of the casino. It can be said that their interaction creates a space under constant negotiation, in the making. Chinese do not just come for gambling, and use the space for many other reasons beyond its gaming facilities. Some come to meet with friends or accompany them, others to be with other people (without necessarily interacting with them), and even in some cases to work.¹⁵⁷ The casino is appropriated by Chinese people as a space which belongs to them and their community. In this process of appropriation, Chinese persons are also shaped. My ethnography of the casino is building on a theoretical perspective in anthropology which calls for acknowledging that space exists through movement rather than as a container. In line with previous works, it looks at how different social actors construct, contest and ground experience in a place (Rodman 2003: 216), how they create a sense of place by engaging with material conditions through their bodily actions (Gray 1999, Setha & Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003), and how experienced interactions with material objects shapes individuals' sense of identity (Miller 2008, Miller et al. 1988). Both people and their environment are mutually constitutive (Fernandez 2003). This dynamic approach to space and place also better informs the literature on community and locality (Amit 2002, Amit & Rapport 2002, Cohen 1985, 2002, Coleman & Collins 2006, Gupta & Ferguson 1992, 1997a, 1997b) by emphasising the equal importance of social relationships with the material world with that of social relationships between individuals (Gray 1999: 441-2). It further demonstrates the argument of Chapter 2 that the concept of 'Chinese community' needs to be more mindful of the fluid and loose ways individuals connect and disconnect with each other.

157 This is the case of Mr Yu who worked in the informal economy as a recruiting agent. This consists of helping job seekers to find an employer. The casino was an ideal place to meet clients.

In this chapter, I want to show that the casino space is not fixed but that it is always in the making under the actions of the different social actors using it. In order to illustrate this, I begin with a short history of gambling in the UK focusing more specifically on the development of casinos in London, the context of their legislation and their physical presence in the urban landscape of London. Then I look at how the casino is thought to be a static place where consumers' desires can be manipulated and how this focus underestimates the role of visitors as actors. This leads me to examine the social dynamic at play in the casino and how the transience of social interactions makes it difficult to give this space a definite shape. As a result, in the last section, I emphasise how the space of the casino is inseparable from a reflection on time and temporalities.

Casinos in London: history, legislation and urban architecture

In comparison with other kinds of gambling in the UK, popular culture portrays casinos as glamorous places for the wealthy. In reality, casino gambling has been equally practised by the lower classes (Miers 2004). The image of gaming, though, remains strongly rooted in the aristocracy's leisure practices. This difference originates in the legal restrictions of the 1541 Act which was in practice directed at the poor segment of the British population (2004: 28). Untouched by legal enforcement, the aristocracy developed excessive gaming into a style during the prosperous time of the eighteenth century when they had a lot of time on their hands (Downes et al. 1976). Gaming had become part of etiquette and a token of good education, as Seymour comments in 1754.

‘Gaming is become fo much the Fafhion amongft the *Beau-Monde*, that he who, in Company, fhould become ignorant of the Games in Vogue, would be reckoned low-bred and hardly fit for Converfation.’ (1754: iii)

Gaming was allowed as an occasional and non-profit activity in a private environment, and became a common socialising practice in private houses and in London and Bath's social clubs within high society (Miers 2004, Timbs 1866). It is those exclusive clubs, and not the gambling houses for commoners, which are considered to be the ancestors of the modern casino in Britain. The history of a famous gaming club in London is kept alive by the casino industry in London. When I asked someone who worked in the casino industry for 40 years about the history of London casinos, he told me the following story and took me along to the casinos carrying on the tradition. William

Crockford, a successful businessman (1775-1844), founded a luxurious establishment on 50 St James's Street in 1827.¹⁵⁸ He organised it as a club which means that members were elected by a Committee to ensure exclusiveness. Rapidly, it became very popular amongst *la crème de la crème* of London Society, and Crockford, a celebrity (Timbs 1866).

‘[The Crockford's Club] rose like a creature of Aladdin's lamp; and the genii themselves could hardly have surpassed the beauty of the internal decorations (...).’ (1866: 282)

The most influential political figures of the time were members, and in accordance with its era the club was mainly frequented by men.¹⁵⁹ Over 150 years after its closure, the same building was re-bought by the London Clubs International under the name of ‘Fifty’ and was renovated as a top-end casino to open in 1996. It has now been closed after 13 years of business.¹⁶⁰ With a £750 annual membership,¹⁶¹ the management was targeting a wealthy clientèle in accordance with its history.¹⁶² Another casino in Curzon Street in Mayfair in the West End of London, owned by the Genting Group,¹⁶³ also marketed for a wealthy clientèle who can afford a lifetime and selective membership of £1000,¹⁶⁴ claims to be the direct descendant of the Crockford's Club. It carries the very name of ‘Crockfords’¹⁶⁵ and calls itself ‘the world's oldest private gaming club’.¹⁶⁶ The history of casinos as presented to me is highly selective. In the 19th century, Crockford's was not the only club where gaming was permitted, but it was the most prestigious. There was also the Watier's Club known as the ‘great Macao gambling-house of a very short period’ (Timbs 1866: 168),¹⁶⁷ the Whist Club, uniquely dedicated to the playing of

158 Timbs (1866) gives 1827 as the year when the Crockford's Club was opened and Miers (2004) 1828.

159 A few famous women of high society would run their own gaming parties. In 1797, Lady Buckingham was convicted of conducting a common gaming house (Miers 2004: 34-35).

160 Fifty closed its door after my fieldwork in November 2009. Its future as a casino remains uncertain and it is unsure to this date who is going to buy its license. ‘London casinos close as financial woes bite’, *International Casino Review*, 86, December 2009.

161 £650 if paid by direct debit.

162 On the former website of Fifty (www.fiftylondon.com, now disconnected), the history of the establishment was put forward as a selling point in the introduction.

163 The Genting Group is a Malaysian multinational. Entertainment and hospitality is an important part of its activity, along with power generation, palm oil plantations, property development and oil & gas. See www.genting.com.

164 Membership requests for Crockfords must be approved by the membership committee.

165 Although the name of Crockford is spelt without an ‘s’, it is spelt with a ‘s’ for the name of the casino on Curzon Street.

166 See Crockfords casino's website at www.crockfords.com/site/home/home.aspx.

167 A period of not quite 12 years, from 1808 to 1819 (Timbs 1866).

the card game whist¹⁶⁸ (1866: 295-298), the Almack's, the Brookes's and the White's Clubs for those which focused mainly on gaming (1866). Accounts of those gaming clubs of high society often omit that many more 'copper hells',¹⁶⁹ less glamorous and open to the rest of the population, could also be found in Covent Garden (Miers 2004).

Just after the success of the Crockford's Club, further restrictions hit gaming houses with the Gaming Act 1845 which affected gaming for the upper classes.¹⁷⁰ They had to relocate to other European countries for gambling, in the resorts and spas of Germany, France and Monte Carlo. It is notably in Monte Carlo that the image of glamour and fabulous riches associated with casino gaming becomes established (Munting 1996: 152). James Bond movies are illustrations of this popular image of casinos and many people do expect to enter a film set when they visit a casino for the first time.¹⁷¹ During my fieldwork I occasionally overheard disappointed comments of newcomers: the staff were not as nicely dressed as they thought they should be, customers even less so. One of my friends wanted to accompany me to the casino one night so she could put on a smart dress. Dealers told me that they could easily spot overdressed newcomers on a Saturday night.

What this story of riches fails to show is that the history of casino gaming in Britain, like other forms of gambling, was shaped by the growth of puritan morality and the social construction of leisure in the 18th and 19th centuries, separated from work (see Chapter 3). In a context of industrialisation, leisure activities had to be morally legitimised within a work ethic (Bailey 1987 [1978]). This meant that gambling, like other activity recognised as non-productive, became increasingly condemned for its immorality. In the first half of the 19th century, social regulation of gambling gives way to anti-gambling legislations. This started with the banning of the long-lived and popular State Lotteries by 1826 (Lotteries Act 1823) (Miers 2004). Then, in 1845, gambling debts were made unenforceable by law taking the settling of gambling disputes away from the realm of judicial courts (Section 18 of the Gaming Act 1845,

168 Whist is a classic English trick-taking card game without bidding for four players in fixed partnerships.

169 Name given to gaming houses at the time (Miers 2004: 40).

170 As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, legal restrictions for gaming before 1845 were in practice mainly directed at the lower classes, leaving untouched the practice of the upper classes (Miers 2004).

171 James Bond films featuring gambling scenes in a casino: Dr No (1962), Thunderball (1965), Casino Royale (1967), Diamonds are forever (1971), Moonraker (1979), For your eyes only (1981), Never say never again (1983), GoldenEye (1995), The world is not enough (1999), Casino Royale (2006).

Miers 2004). The Gaming Act 1845 also condemned the gaming excesses of the upper classes and most particularly their flagship, the Crockford's Club (Downes et al. 1976: 35).

In the second half of the 19th century, anti-gambling legislation strengthened the moral crusade against gambling and showed great concern for the impact of gambling practices on working classes (Clapson 1992, Chinn 1991). In this time of industrialisation and urbanisation, time and space were taken away from workers who became increasingly interested in betting. Betting had become equally popular with the upper classes (Miers 2004) but only lower classes' betting habits were condemned. As a result, later legislation was destined to diminish the power of bookmakers and betting houses (Betting Houses Act 1853) and the development of street betting (Vagrancy Act 1873,¹⁷² Street Betting Act 1906) while making it still possible to bet with the Tote at racecourses and on credit. As Clapson (1992) argued, at that time gambling became a debate about class divisions and the proper use to which working class people's time might be put.

‘Socially, it was felt that whilst the rich might still be allowed to be privately with luxuries, the poor could not be allowed to endanger their own economic interests, nor to cause a public nuisance, by betting away their scarce resources in cheap gambling houses.’ (1992: 39)

Victorian legislation survived until 1960 when the government finally decided to legalise off-course cash betting. While the Act was mainly focused on betting, it unintentionally enabled the development of casino gaming in Britain. It allowed clubs to provide games of equal chances and to charge an entrance fee to recoup their expenses (Downes et al. 1976: 41). Gaming clubs quickly mushroomed in London and in the rest of the country.¹⁷³ Although they were forbidden to make a profit out of gaming, the lack of legal controls led to excessive participation, commercial exploitation and criminal involvement. Scandals prompted a new Act in 1968 to correct

172 The Vagrancy Act 1873 (36 & 37 Vict., c. 38) provides that '[e]very person playing or betting by way of wagering or gaming on any street, road, highway or other open and public place, or in any open place to which the public have, or are permitted to have, access, at or with any table or instrument of gaming, or any coin, card, token or other article used as an instrument or means of gaming, at any game or pretended game of chance, shall be deemed a rogue and vagabond.' (Hastings & Selbie 2003: 165)

173 There were around 12,000 Casinos throughout the UK at the time, a number which stands in great contrast to the actual 143 on 31 March 2009. Gambling Commission, Industry statistics 2008/2009; www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/gambling_sectors/casinos/about_the_casinos_industry/about_casinos.aspx.

the loophole in the Betting and Gaming Act 1960. From then on, every premise had to be licensed by the newly created Gaming Board. Many casinos closed down.¹⁷⁴ The Gaming Act 1968 reflected the new British attitude towards gambling for ‘unstimulated demand’, which was about ‘meet[ing] demand that would otherwise be satisfied by an unregulated market’ (Miers 2002: 21). The Act also required casinos (and bingo halls) to operate as member’s clubs under the regime of the ‘24 hour rule’. Every new customer had to wait 24 hours¹⁷⁵ before they could use the casino premises. Restrictions were also set on locations and casino licenses were only permitted in designated areas, which in London consisted of Westminster, Kensington, Mayfair and Camden.

Following the creation of the National Lottery in 1994 and the rise of internet gambling, the government became increasingly concerned not to lose out on gambling revenues (Miers 2002). It is in this context that the Gambling Act 2005 emerged. A new area of commercial gambling within the wider leisure industry began. Invested with greater powers, the Gambling Commission replaced the Gambling Board to provide guidelines and ensure compliance with the Gambling Act 2005. For the casinos, changes towards liberalisation meant: abolition of the ‘24 hour rule’, tipping, advertising, open door policy, 24 hour opening... The Act also allowed for the provision of 17 new casino licenses: one regional casino, eight large ones¹⁷⁶ and eight small ones. It is this section of the Gambling Act 2005¹⁷⁷ that drew the most attention and contention politically.¹⁷⁸ As a consequence it was finally dropped by the Government in July 2007 (Miers 2006, 2007). The regional casino will not go ahead and it is unclear to what extent the 16 others will.¹⁷⁹ The move towards the American-style casino has been greatly tempered, but is still happening on a smaller scale. In anticipation of the Gambling Act 2005 on 1st September 2007, a new breed of casinos has already been launched in the UK market.

174 Ibid.

175 It started with a 48 hours cool off period and then was reduced to 24 hour.

176 One of the eight large casinos was granted to a London borough, Newham.

177 Gambling Act 2005, Section 175(4).

178 Literature on casinos show that there is a constant debate over the negative versus the positive impact on the local community where a new casino is going to be built (Giacopassi, Nicholls & Stitts 1999, Reith 2006).

179 ‘Deal or no deal? No one profits from casino loss’, *The Observer*, 3 April 2008; ‘Middlesbrough council exert control over new casino licence’, *International Casino Review*, 74, December 2008; ‘Interest in new style projects likely to focus on just a few’, *International Casino Review*, 76, February 2009; ‘Is the UK ready for its sweet sixteenth?’, *International Casino Review*, 76, February 2009; ‘Movement at last on UK’s new casinos’, *International Casino Review*, 80, June 2009; ‘Doubts over whether small casino will put Torbay on the map’, *International Casino Review*, 83, September 2009.

The last casino to open in London in May 2007, the Empire, is the most prominent example. It is marketed as a place for more general entertainment under the label 'glamorous Vegas style casino' and the tagline 'A touch of Vegas in the heart of London'.¹⁸⁰ 'Las Vegas is coming to London' echoed the Times.¹⁸¹ Beyond the provision of gaming, the Empire has a number of other facilities: two restaurants, three bar areas including a club style one with 70s style illuminated dance floor, a giant screen to watch football, a face-to-face poker room, a small lounge with two flat screens, eight conference/cinema rooms ranging from a capacity of 26 to 1330 people, versatile function rooms and a boutique ice parlour. With a capacity of up to 1800 people, it is one of the biggest casinos in London.¹⁸² Its trendy, dark decor makes it more like a nightclub and is testimony to its desire to attract a younger and wider population. The last casino license to have been granted in London has similar ambitions, and plans to go even further down the line of entertainment with a 160 seats cabaret. This new casino will spring up only a few steps away from the Empire in a place chosen for its historical importance for entertainment in London, the Hippodrome, after which it is named. Like the Empire, the Hippodrome will have, in addition to the cabaret, large premises: three gaming areas (main, card room, high stakes room), one Michelin-starred restaurant, four bars including a smoking terrace and one hospitality suite.¹⁸³

These two new casinos are a good example of how regulations impact on the space of the casino. As Derek, who started in the industry as a croupier and who has worked his way up through all possible positions for the last 45 years, explains, 'the industry kicked off in the basement, and now that it's out it needs to continue in that direction'. In the 1970s, tax legislation pushed casino companies to set up premises in the basement. The Ritz casino license was obtained at the time, and the ballroom in the basement was

180 See The Empire's website at www.thecasino.co.uk/pages; 'London's West End gets set for the Empire', *International Casino Review*, 56, June 2007: 'June will see the arrival of Las Vegas glamour to London's West End at the Casino at the Empire set to be one of the English capital's largest casinos, offering a modern and sophisticated gaming, drinking and dining experience all under one roof.'

181 'Inside London's huge new casino', *The Times*, May 26 2007; www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/travel/news/article1840175.ece.

182 The biggest casino in London is the Victoria on Edgware road.

183 See The Hippodrome casino's website at www.hippodromecasino.com; 'Historic London landmark to be brought back to life', *International Casino Review*, 73, November 2008; 'London's Hipp casino renovation under way', *International Casino Review*, 79, May 2009.

refurbished to accommodate gaming. The spatial changes of the casino after liberalisation are not as drastic as with the betting shops. Before the Gambling Act 2005 they were uncomfortable and unpleasant places by design where punters would not wish to linger (Cassidy 2010: 143). However, the restraints of 40 years of legislation are still very noticeable in the way casinos fit into London's urban architecture.

Unlike Las Vegas, London is not a city which has grown out of casino gambling. In Las Vegas, the whole aesthetic of the city is dominated by casinos' magnificent and impressive structures. In London, casinos are small, fully integrated into the rest of the urban landscape, in concentrated areas, and their number varied between 26 to 23 during the time of the research.¹⁸⁴ Two of the casinos I visited regularly for fieldwork, the Golden Nugget and Napoleons, consist of no more than one big room plus a bar-restaurant area. Besides, casinos in London do not have a recognisable external architecture or pompous entrance that attracts the eye of the pedestrian passing by, and if they try to draw attention, they do not do it in a dissimilar way from other commercial buildings and their neighbour's front doors. Not quite as one imagines the entrance of a casino where James Bond could arrive any minute at the wheel of an expensive sport car and walk up massive stairs with a sexy and elegant woman on his arm. Obvious it is expected to be, obvious it is not. From the outside, in the street, casinos in London do not look grand or flashy. As a matter of fact, casino premises in London have always settled in a pre-existing revamped building.¹⁸⁵ So, to this date, the limitations of the Gaming Act 1968 are still structuring the geography of the casino market in London, with the exception of the new casino license in Newham, which will also be the first architectural plan for a casino in London.¹⁸⁶ The structures and spaces of the different casinos in London are marked by the history of the gambling legislation that fuelled its rise. This means that casinos in London have developed differently from the American-style and tourist-oriented casino (Munting 1996: 153). However, under the push of the Gambling Act 2005 casinos in London are now aspiring to this style. They have always been places of consumption with the aim of attracting gamblers to their door, but with the current liberalisation of gambling, this task has been greatly facilitated.

184 Ibid. footnote 24, Chapter 1.

185 Apart from the Crockford's Club which was purpose-built in 1827.

186 The concentration of casinos in Westminster, Camden and Kensington & Chelsea (See map 1 Chapter 1) is due to the fact that there have not been many new casino licenses in London, except for the Empire, Newham and the Hippodrome (the two last ones are not built and open yet).



Picture 10: The Golden Nugget is located in the Trocadero building, just a few steps away from Picadilly Circus.



Picture 11: Situated in Leicester Square, the Empire and Napoleons are next-door neighbours.



Picture 12: G Casino is also within the vicinity of Chinatown between Leicester Square and Picadilly Circus.

Casino design and marketing: channelling consumers' desires

Casinos in London are products of an era during which the commodification of chance has been normalised and the work ethic has been replaced by a 'new kind of consumption ethic' celebrating risk and instant gratification (Reith 2007). As such, they are conceived and projected as a space where gamblers can fulfil their consumers' desires. Although the interior design of casinos in London does not so much exploit the world of scale, excess and fantasy so characteristic of Las Vegas casinos (Henderson 1999), this does not mean that it is played down. Visibility and luxury are still predominant traits. One still knows when one enters a casino in London. There is a feel to it, a certitude that you are stepping in to a space outside of our common landscape and rhythm. Layout and design are unmistakable. They are clinquant and sybaritic, overly adorned with all sort of tinselled ornaments, strikingly standing out in comparison to the places we usually occupy. Luxury in the design must be apparent: what is important is to be visible not authentic, or authentic to popular ideas of luxury (Cass 2004). As a result, the display of luxury is often overstated as a way to portray a utopian land of decadence where money is infinitely abundant. Garish casino design seems to perpetuate the idea that all humans are greedy for money and that extravagant spending and new desires are morally acceptable.¹⁸⁷ The style of British casinos is currently being fostered in the UK under the effects of Gambling Act 2005 which took effect on 1st September 2007. The casino industry welcomes this new legal framework. Omar, customer relations manager at the Empire comments:

‘When deregulation came in, three years ago now, from the old gaming act to the new gaming act, everything changed in terms of marketing, everything.’

Casinos in London exploit an image of glamour and luxury pretending to democratise it. Beyond this general association of the casino with the lifestyle of the rich, each casino develops its own style and visual identity and is trying to appeal to different customers in different ways. There is a quality of degree in the luxury that is portrayed. This reflects the fact that the stratification of the casino market in London is based on the customer's ability to spend money. Traditionally, London casinos are divided between

¹⁸⁷ In Chapter 7 the concept of greed will be observed and analysed in more detail.

high roller casinos, referred as ‘Mayfair casinos’,¹⁸⁸ and low stakes ones, usually situated in the West End. For the casinos at the higher end of the market, high standards are expected, if not a prerequisite. Crockfords, les Ambassadeurs, the Ritz Club, Maxims, the Clermont or Aspinalls Club welcome and target a rich and very rich clientèle.¹⁸⁹ This is reflected in the design and the décor which is linked to the past with a strong accent on history. Some are based in old historical buildings like Les Ambassadeurs, while others have been done up to look like they are coming from an older time like the Ritz. Also, in line with the tradition of social clubs in the 19th century, not everyone can become a member, and apart from the price of membership, a recommendation from an existing member is often required. Although membership is no longer a legal requirement to get into a casino, those six select casinos are keeping it obligatory to mark their difference with other casinos. Most of all, in the Mayfair casinos, customers are always taken good care of and provided with special favours directed at the needs and desires of the individual (car with chauffeur, hotel room, VIP gaming room...).¹⁹⁰ Les Ambassadeurs, an exclusive casino in Mayfair, currently offers to fly Russian high rollers to London for \$8.000 per head.¹⁹¹ This is in contrast to the 17 other London casinos, among which are the three casinos in the area of Leicester Square where I carried out fieldwork. In those casinos, marketing is mainly directed at particular communities and groups. They also have VIP guests that they take care of individually but those remain a minority. Derek gives a clear overview of this traditional market division.

‘In a higher stake casino, any marketing is aimed at the individual, but in the lower stake casino it’s aimed at the customer in general. You’ll get competition at both ends of the market. The Ritz will be looking to offer Philip Green, for example, something that would interest Philip Green, whereas for the Sultan of Brunei, they would offer something different that would interest the Sultan of Brunei. The Golden Nugget will be looking for something that would interest the Chinese community; the Victoria will be looking for something that would interest the Arab community. So you know there is a different

188 High stakes casinos are usually referred by people in the industry as ‘Mayfair casinos’ because most of them are situated in Mayfair or around, with the exception of the Maxim’s Club which is in Kensington.

189 During my fieldwork there was another one, Fifty, which has closed down since. See footnote 160 for more detail.

190 Although this is being tempered as an effect of the recession. The casino industry like other sectors is carrying out cuts wherever it can.

191 ‘New games and opportunities but nothing catching in Moscow’, *International Casino Review*, 82, August 2009.

approach depending what end of the market they're going for. They're much more general in the lower staking end and much more specific in the higher staking end.'

Using the new possibilities offered by the Gambling Act 2005, casinos in the West End have now the ambition to attract a wider clientèle. The Empire and the Golden Nugget, which both belong to the same company, London Clubs International (LCI),¹⁹² are now both applying an open door policy,¹⁹³ which allows anyone to walk in straight off the street without the need to show an ID or sign up as a member.¹⁹⁴ Staff at the Empire have reported that this has resulted in a significant spike in attendance. Membership still exists but it is now mainly a marketing tool to encourage customers' loyalty, since being a member gives you access to unlimited gambling,¹⁹⁵ promotions, occasional events and special offers. Like a less exclusive version of membership at a Mayfair casino it nonetheless has the advantage of creating a sense of exclusiveness within the premises of a casino. It makes regular visitors of a specific casino people of a same kind; it preserves and maintains boundaries with outsiders and most of all competitors. This loyalty card system, which allows the casino to collect data on customers in order to anticipate future marketing moves,¹⁹⁶ is now pervasive in most casinos in the UK.¹⁹⁷ Harrah's, a big American company, now owner of LCI, has been a leader of this marketing strategy since the 90s.¹⁹⁸ Every new member to those two casinos automatically becomes a member of their 'Player Rewards' scheme which makes it possible to accumulate points at their other branches.¹⁹⁹ Loyalty cards also provide important marketing information by recording customers' transactions.

192 From now on, London Clubs International will be referred to as LCI.

193 Since the beginning of 2009.

194 During the period I was doing fieldwork (September 2007 to September 2008), this was not in place yet and you still had to become a member to access the casino premises.

195 To become a member, any customer is required to present a proof of ID, which is also needed to gamble on or cash out winnings of, over £1000 in total on any gaming table or roulette machine.

196 'Management systems just the tool kit for loyalty', *International Casino Review*, 81, July 2009; LCI launches new and improved Player Rewards', *International Casino Review*, 93, July 2010. The Player Rewards card scheme has a website dedicated to it. It can be viewed at www.playerrewardscard.com/index.php. Also see Appendix B for a copy of the welcome letter that is sent to a new Player Reward member.

197 'Why the UK's local market lends itself to loyalty', *International Casino Review*, 81, July 2009.

198 'A pat on the back for loyalty schemes', *International Casino Review*, 81, July 2009.

199 The Rendezvous and the Sportsman in London, and the Rendezvous Brighton, the Rendezvous Southend, Manchester235, Alea Nottingham, Alea Glasgow and Alea Leeds in the Provinces.

This new marketing style is also leading to a blurring of the boundaries with VIP casinos since at the Empire they are trying to cater for customers with different financial capacities as illustrated by my conversation with Margaret, Assistant Marketing Manager at the Empire:

‘We have our *regular customers* who come in daily, who don’t spend a lot of money but they are here very frequently. Then we have another type of customer who is *the potential to become a VIP*. They are regular customers but we just want to increase their spend. And we’ve got the *VIP customer* who’s got a certain amount and are worth a certain amount of money to us and we take special care of.’

More flagrantly, the look and architecture of the British casinos is changing for a more modern and attractive visual identity. Most casinos which have opened throughout the UK in the last four years are reflecting this trend. This is the most noticeable difference when walking in to the Empire for the first time. Derek explains:

‘I think that’s one of the reasons why the Empire is successful, because it is different. Just walking in there, it looks different. It’s a visual effect as well as anything else that they are doing in there.’

It’s true that after a visit at the Golden Nugget it feels immediately more glamorous, more like an expensive hotel. The colours are much darker, a blend of black, dark brown, brown, grey and cream with splashes of shiny silver, crystalline and matt white lightning in the main gaming floor.²⁰⁰ The textures also inspire more comfort while demonstrating luxury of a trendier vein in a combination of leather, window glass, wood, small tiles, carpet, and touches of metal. In line with this branding theme, the patterns of the wallpaper and the carpets are of a subtler note consisting of simple flower-like or geometric repetition while the layout offers a balanced mixture of lines and curves, large spaces and intimate corners. Finally, but not least, the lighting is neither too dark nor bright with variations of degree in bigger and smaller parts of the casino. Signs of being a casino are still noticeable though. The main bar, for example, is

200 This array of colours of the same tone was harmonised with everything else for the first year it was opened from the staff working uniform to the baize of the gaming tables (traditionally of a green colour). Since then, formal uniform has now been changed for a more informal one of a unisex coloured polo with the Casino logo and changed again for black shirt and trouser uniforms. New tables with different colour baize (purple, green...) have also been added to or have replaced some of the tables with brown baize. In this atmosphere of constant marketing innovation (see later argument on this point in the chapter), it is very likely that the casino environment described in this thesis would have changed again by the time the reader peruses these descriptions.

built to be the centre of attraction in an open plan designed room with a mezzanine floor at its edges in the style of a ship or a large ferry. A huge chandelier trickling down from the ceiling in a complicated structured just above it dominates the room and looks totally over the top. The first time I went in to the Empire, it felt more like entering a fashionable London nightclub or bar than a casino. As a matter of fact, it offers the same functions and it is obviously trying to attract the wide part of the population who likes to go out and feed itself on urban entertainment. LCI is hoping they will spend a bit of money on a few bets while visiting. Raymond, a dealer with 25 years of experience in the industry, describes to me this new marketing style which has come to London.

‘And when you put up a club, like say the Empire, they’re not looking for your normal consistent gambler that has been gambling for the past 20 years in the casino, they’re looking for young people coming to get slightly pissed, lose £20 and then go. So then, they’re looking for higher volume, lower for their custom.’

Maria Slater, LCI Marketing Director publicly commented that the Empire’s ‘brand identity aims to appeal to a wider audience’.²⁰¹ In addition to traditional gamers, this new casino concept is targeting populations which have been less present in the demographic of the UK casinos till now, such as young adults, women, tourists and business travellers.²⁰² LCI under the impulse of its new ownership by Harrah’s since 2006 is propelling the move towards this new breed of casinos. The Empire is the second prototype in a series of five unique UK projects by LCI.²⁰³ They are all built and conceived as unique entertainment complexes offering other leisure activities besides gaming. Club Director Maddy Hall declares at the opening of the new LCI casino in Nottingham.

‘ALEA is more than a casino. We’re completely different from existing offerings in our region. Leisure and entertainment is what we’re about, it’s not just about gambling. For

201 ‘London’s West End gets set for the Empire’, *International Casino Review*, 56, June 2007.

202 ‘Glasgow on a roll as Scotland’s biggest casino opens’, *International Casino Review*, 65, March 2008.

203 The first one is Manchester235 which opened in October 2006. Three other ones are open under the brand name ALEA. Alea is from ‘Alea jacta est’, the die is cast, in honour of the Harrah’s Caesar casino in Las Vegas. After the Empire, the first Alea casino opened in Nottingham in November 2007 (‘The die is cast as LCI opens first ALEA casino’, *International Casino Review*, 62, December 2007); another one in Glasgow in February 2008 (‘Glasgow on a roll as Scotland’s biggest casino opens’, *International Casino Review*, 65, March 2008); and the last one in Leeds in September 2008 (‘London Clubs conquers Leeds with Alea’s opening’, *International Casino Review*, 72, October 2008).

those who want to gamble, yes, we have a product offering, but the main message is ‘enjoy yourself’. ALEA is really about adult entertainment.’²⁰⁴

Tommy Gibbons, Club Director of the new Alea in Leeds, claims ‘[w]e’re not just a casino; we’re an entertainment complex’.²⁰⁵ This new brand of casino recognised as the new ‘successful model for the casino industry’ has prompted reaction from competitors.²⁰⁶ The Rank Group, owner of the Grosvenor casinos, is revamping some of its casinos in line with this concept of unique complex entertainment under the new ‘G Casino’ branding.²⁰⁷ Aspers, which opened the first casino of this type in the UK in October 2005,²⁰⁸ launched two new ones in Swansea and Northampton in 2008, and is planning to open another one in Bournemouth.²⁰⁹ Clermont Leisure has been less successful in its attempt to grab this market opportunity; its 30 applications for casinos combined with hotels throughout the UK were dropped in May 2009.²¹⁰

In comparison to the new style of the Empire, the Golden Nugget that I describe in the introduction looks garish and unappealing and seems to be at the lower end of the market spectrum. As explains David, the Golden Nugget is one of those ‘spit and sawdust casinos’ or ‘ground action casinos’, where interior design has never been given too much attention in the bid to attract customers. The priority was to cater for people who just wanted to gamble. The Golden Nugget is, with the Sportsman, the smallest and oldest casino of the ten casinos²¹¹ that LCI owns.²¹² In that sense, its style is reminiscent of the Betting and Gaming Act 1960 which survived the restrictions of the Gaming Act 1968. As LCI employees describe it, the Golden Nugget has been around for a while

204 ‘The die is cast as LCI opens first ALEA casino’, *International Casino Review*, 62, December 2007.

205 ‘Alea sizing up new Leeds opportunity’, *International Casino Review*, 82, August 2009.

206 ‘Newcastle’s Aspers is the model casino for UK provinces’, *International Casino Review*, 82, August 2009.

207 ‘Rank fight backs with new advertising campaign, new venues, and trendy revamps’, *International Casino Review*, 61, November 2007; ‘Rank to invest £15m in Scotland as casinos roll on Rank to invest £15m in Scotland as casinos roll on’, *International Casino Review*, 74, December 2008. ‘Grosvenor opens rebranded Coventry venue’, *International Casino Review*, 86, December 2009. Hard Rock Café in G in Leicester Sq reopened on 1 November 2007 as a G casino.

208 Ibid. 206.

209 ‘New Aspers open to all’, *International Casino Review*, 70, August 2008. In Newcastle and Swansea, Aspers is said to be particularly successful at recruiting women as members who can be found at 30% than the national norm.

210 ‘Mixed bag in the UK as Guoco pulls plug on application’, *International Casino Review*, 80, June 2009.

211 Fifty was the eleventh and smallest one but it has now closed down and was only owned partially in partnership with Robert Earl, who set up Planet Hollywood.

212 Harrah’s Annual Report 2008, see the table ‘Summary on property information’ on page 14.

and caters for old timers who have come to this casino for years and would not particularly like to see it change.

‘Golden Nugget has a slower trade but a more loyal trade, at the same time, and an older trade.’ (Margaret)

‘We wouldn’t dream of changing the GN at the moment. Yeah, because that’s what they’re used to, that’s what that market is used to, I believe they’re happy with it. I think it will stay like that for a while.’ (Omar)

The third casino, Napoleons, does not belong to the big fishes. It is one of the six casinos run by the A&S Leisure Group.²¹³ In that respect it is categorised in the industry as belonging to the group of the ‘small casino companies, as opposed to the ‘four big ones’: Genting Group, Rank, Gala and LCI.²¹⁴

Property	Casino Space Sq. ft.	Slot machines	Tables
Golden Nugget	5,100	40	20
Rendezvous Casino	6,200	40	20
The Sportsman	5,200	40	20
Rendezvous Brighton	7,800	70	30
Rendezvous Southend-on-sea	8,700	60	30
Manchester 235	11,500	80	30
The Casino at the Empire	20,900	100	50
Alea Nottingham	10,000	60	20
Alea Glasgow	15,000	60	30
Alea Leeds	10,300	60	30

Table 5: London Clubs International Casinos in the UK and their gambling facilities (Source: Harrah’s Annual Report 2008)

This difference of ownership is noticeable in the management style. While the Golden Nugget and the Empire have recently adopted a unisex black trousers and black shirt uniform, after a year of trying out a more sporty and undifferentiated look for all its staff consisting of a polo shirt and black trousers,²¹⁵ the Napoleons staff still wear formal and gender specific uniforms. Its interior design is also in-between. Slightly more chic than the Golden Nugget, it is smaller and not as modern looking as the Empire. No more than a large room for gaming, a small bar and a slightly elevated restaurant area on the side, Napoleons has a low ceiling and is dimly lit in the fashion of

213 The five other A&S Leisure Group casinos are in Sheffield (two), Leeds, Hull and Bradford. See Napoleons casinos website at www.napoleons-casinos.co.uk.

214 LCI in addition to its 11 UK casinos also owns three casinos in Egypt and one in South Africa. LCI is also part of Harrah’s an American casino company with 38 casinos in the United States (Harrah’s Annual Report 2008).

215 Since the beginning of 2010, while the unisex uniform was implemented in 2009.

large black lampshades directly illuminating the gaming tables. The predominance of wood everywhere and its small size gives an impression of intimacy and of being on a classy ship. It is juxtaposed with a mixture of bright and dark colours: a crimson red on the carpet, shiny golden squares and lines on dominantly varnished red wood walls and shiny black ceiling, some cream chairs, some black ones, some cream and black and large black leather sofas in the bar area. It has a nicer design style than the Golden Nugget which reflects that it is more recent (it was opened in the 80s, the Golden Nugget in the 60s), but in comparison to the Empire it now looks less attractive.

Organisation	Total casinos
Gala	27
Rank (Grosvenor and 'G' Casinos)	32
London Clubs International	11
A & S Leisure	6
Genting Casinos	45
Aspinalls	4
Blue Chip	3
Clockfair	2
Individual operators including 2 card clubs	15
Total	145

Table 6: Casino ownership by operator as at 31 March 2009

(Source: Gambling Commission – Gambling Industry Statistics 2008/09: 7)

Seducing Chinese customers: marketing competition in Leicester Square

These three casinos are also strongly defined by their location. Their vicinity with Chinatown and a high attendance of Chinese customers tends to reinforce the idea that all Chinese people are gamblers. Most people I talked to about my research, Chinese and non-Chinese, saw the relationship of Chinese people with the casinos as unproblematic, in Sam's words, they saw the Chinese as having 'a genetic predisposition to gamble'. However, the association between Chinese people and casinos is not 'natural' but historically constructed as a consequence of regulatory changes and active marketing towards Chinese customers.²¹⁶ The new possibilities offered under the Gambling Act 2005 have only fostered this connection. In Leicester Square, the three casinos my fieldwork is centred on are working hard to court the

²¹⁶ It is also interesting to note that the marketing towards Chinese customers in London is echoed throughout the world. With Macao overtaking Las Vegas as the largest market for gambling in the world, Chinese people are the fastest growing consumers of casino gambling. See 'Macao table take outstrips Vegas', *Financial Times*, 5 October 2009.

Chinese population, which represents for the Empire alone 60% of their customers.²¹⁷ Since Chinese customers are particularly responsive to special offers, the battleground consists of offering promotions that would attract Chinese customers to visit one casino rather than another.²¹⁸ Margaret explains the Chinese market from the perspective of the Empire.

‘The Asian market is a lot more focussed. If there is a good deal to be grabbed, they would be there. So they look at any promotion that we run. They will be the first. At the moment, we’ve got a lottery kind of promotion. Every day at 7pm, we draw someone out of the tombola and they win a prize. The people who take part in that are probably 90% Chinese. They love promotions. Conversely, we have to stay ahead of our competitors because if they’ve got better promotions than us we lose a lot of our Asian market at that time. They do chase promotions.’

Since the Golden Nugget and the Empire belong to the same company, LCI, they tend to form a team against the competition, which is mainly Napoleons,²¹⁹ and in anticipation of the Hippodrome’s opening in early 2011.²²⁰ Both LCI casinos run similar promotions but at different times and are supervised by the same marketing manager. Besides apparently ‘non-ethnic’ promotions like lottery draws, all three casinos run promotions and events specifically referring to Chinese culture. The most popular one is the Chinese New Year, which usually happens around January or February.²²¹ At the Empire, they have big expectations of what this specific Chinese day can bring in terms of profitability to the casino, as comments Omar.

‘It will be one of our biggest days of the year in terms of potential profitability I think.’

The Chinese New Year is also an opportunity for LCI to affirm their relationship with the Chinese community and their local identity. The marketing team is notably looking to sponsor the next Chinese New Year in 2010 in collaboration with the London

217 Note that there is a big decline in Asian gaming on Friday and Saturday nights at the Empire due to the influx of London’s working force looking for entertainment during weekends.

218 The three casinos have all their leaflets translated into Chinese, the second and only other language used in leaflets besides English. See Appendix C.

219 The G Casino (former Hard Rock) is not so much considered to be a threat since it does not provide the game that Chinese particularly favour, Punto Banco, as I was told by my interlocutors from the casino industry.

220 All current marketing decisions of the Empire are made with the arrival of the Hippodrome in mind.

221 The Chinese New Year is determined according to the lunar calendar.

Chinatown Chinese Association.²²² It is planning to provide all the red lanterns hung up in the streets of Chinatown and the dragon dance. The three casinos also celebrate another important Chinese festival, the Mid-Autumn festival, also known as Moon festival, which takes place late September or early October.²²³ In contrast, the celebration of those festivals in a casino ranks low behind celebrating it with family back home. Mr Yu misses the celebrations of the Mid-Autumn Festival in Malaysia and looks down on what is provided in the casino.

‘In England, from what I’ve seen there isn’t much. There are some, there are things to eat. In the casino, you can eat, there are all sorts. But in Malaysia it’s different. In Malaysia, the Moon Festival is very important, a lot of people come. There are parades, festooned cars, lanterns, dancing, singing, variety shows...’

For Ahmei, she only envisages coming to the casino for the Moon Festival because there is nowhere else she can go and because she cannot celebrate it with her family, neither with her daughter who is working on that day.

Daily free buffets are also a way to ensure a regular attendance of Chinese customers. For a long time, a feature of the Napoleons only, it is now offered by the Empire at 11pm, to compete with the Napoleons’ buffet at midnight. Before it was open to everyone, now it has been restricted to customers only, which means you have to be actively playing to claim your due.²²⁴ More recently (September 2009), the Empire has also introduced ‘Morning vouchers’ on roulette between 7am and 12am and low stakes gaming (£5) at Punto Banco between 6am-9am to attract Chinese customers in the early hours when the casino is quieter. It is important to constantly please the Chinese customer because according to marketing staff in the Empire if one Chinese customer is unhappy they take away many others.

‘Chinese move in packs. Always. From one casino to the other. If we were to upset them here, we’d lose a big market for quite a long time. One person wouldn’t go, it would be a big group. We have to be very careful with that market.’ (Omar)

222 LCCA is an association of businesses in Chinatown. It runs the celebration of the Chinese New Year in London in partnership with Westminster Council (see www.chinatownchinese.co.uk).

223 The festival is held on the 15th day of the eighth month in the Chinese calendar, which is usually around late September or early October in the Gregorian calendar.

224 In this time of recession, casinos are becoming increasingly tighter in the provision of perks. Suppressed in some casinos, they are restricted to players in others. The era of ‘comps’ is finished and even select casinos make their best customers pay the bill for a drink or some food. Also see footnote 190.



Picture 13: Morning Voucher promotion at the Empire, September 2009.

In this market, it is not enough to attract Chinese customers to the casino's premises with promotions and other special events, what the casino really wants is to get them to play and to spend money. In that respect, the Empire is the most successful of the three. It has notably secured a stronghold over the game Punto Banco, which is known within the industry for being 'the game that the Chinese people play more than anything', as Omar says. He continues:

'It's, I'll say at least, 95% a Chinese game really. 100 people can be playing it at any one time in there, there are four tables. It gets very, very busy. Very busy.'

The Punto Banco area has been moved to a new corner of the Empire and refurbished to accommodate an Asian theme and atmosphere tailored to the perceived demands of the Asian market.

'We have four Punto Banco tables at the back. It's literally a sort of Asian gaming area. There are different coloured lights, there is no music in there for instance. We've got this sort of liberal area which they can game in quite happily.'

Because the Empire is busy, it can justify having a minimum stake of £10 which is higher than the competition (£5 in Napoleons and the Golden Nugget).

'We can justify having higher stakes because at night time we never have a free table. So we can justify it having £10 minimum on it, because we've got the market here we don't

need to lower our stakes to attract people in. Our ones are always higher than the competition.'

Marketing strategies targeting Chinese customers are taking place in a highly competitive local market. They are needed to maintain a flow of regular players (and make sure it is not lost to the competition), among which the Chinese population is the overwhelming majority in Leicester Square. It already becomes clear through the casino perspective that the Chinese customer is far from being a silent and passive consumer. Marketing strategies as I explore below do not always work and Chinese customers play a role in the making and unmaking of the casinos' landscape, and the games and technology casino managements offer.

Whose space?

In much of the existing literature, casinos are strongly depicted as places which are consumed for what they represent, where consumption is manipulated by signs (Baudrillard 1998 [1970]). Las Vegas is the archetype of this manipulation, forged into 'both plentiful, material oasis and precarious, vanishing mirage' (Schüll 2001: 377). The space of the casino seems to only exist from the planner and the casino company's perspective:

'A hybrid art, casino design combines architecture and interior design with a large dose of glamorous theatrics, a serious need for security, and a highly manipulative approach to space planning. But above all, contemporary casino design must amaze and amuse. This is the architecture of entertainment and fantasy. It may not be profound, it may often be two-dimensional or less-than-faithful to the places it replicates – but in the end it's meant to be fun, and if it succeeds at that, the other stuff doesn't matter. Bring on the crowds, and keep the volcanoes erupting and the dice rolling.' (Henderson 1999: 10)

In this quote from a book on casino design, the casino is idealised as an accomplished place of manipulation in a world of consumption, where consumer desire is channelled and controlled appropriately. It is accepted in the casino industry that after choosing a good location, casino design is of major importance to appeal to customers' desires and keep them engaged with gaming (Friedman 2000, Kranes 1995). In the context of enticement, gamblers are expected to regulate their consumption practices by self-governance (Reith 2007). In effect, this emphasis on the casino as a place dedicated to

the consumption of money tends to portray the gambler as a victim, a passive user of the space, easily succumbing to the tempting world of the casino. In that vein, psychological studies are taking an interest in how the structural characteristics of slot machines (Griffiths 1993, Griffiths & Parke 2006), the use of certain sound or music (Dixon, Griffiths & Parke 2005, Marmurek et al. 2007, Noseworthy and Finlay 2009, Trigg & Griffiths 2007) and casino design features, like light, colour, crowding or slot machines grouping (Finlay et al. 2007, 2010) encourage gambler to play for longer periods of time. But are gamblers willingly enchanted when they set foot in those lands of opulence where money is apparently growing on trees? Through the literature, there is a real conviction that the gamblers' perception of time is, or at least can be, distorted by casino tactics. This, I argue in the rest of the chapter, is underestimating the role of gamblers as co-producers of space along with the architect and the casino management, and as time-makers. In that respect, the distinction between '*perceived*', '*conceived*' and '*lived*' space made by Lefebvre (2002 [1968]) is pertinent to my study of the casino. A casino is '*conceived*', designed and produced by architects and the casino company, but the meaning of the space, and the space itself, is adapted and transformed as it is '*perceived*' and '*lived*' by the different social actors who occupy the space among whom a big proportion are gamblers. In this section, I describe how casino design and product placement are experienced by the targets of casino marketing. It will become clear that Chinese players are not passive receivers of information, nor do they always reproduce the behaviour that casino management might expect. The casino environment is underdetermined in this sense: a space of continual and ambivalent negotiation.

It's 8pm; the manager makes an announcement on the microphone. They're about to inaugurate the 'Celestial Punto Banco' table, which is still covered by a white sheet to keep the suspense. The inauguration is accompanied by a lion dance performance and finger food, the manager informs us. The show starts a few minutes later. The lion dances round the Punto Banco table amusing the crowd. Some Chinese people of the attendance get really excited and start playing with him. A woman tries to give him her handbag to eat. A man follows him from behind holding onto the lion's back. Everyone is laughing loudly. Many people are taking pictures with their mobile phones. So am I. Finally, the lion pulls the white sheet away that he caught between his jaws to uncover the Celestial Punto Banco table. Images of yellow dragons and red phoenix have been inserted in the baize. It is supposed to be lucky. Is that all? It seems to be. Just new

symbols. Nothing else. The audience, mainly Chinese, come and feel the new symbols with both hands but hardly anyone actually sits down to play. Everyone is far more interested in the free food that is passing round. The crowd of Chinese members is actually really pushy, throwing themselves at the food as if they had not eaten for days. I run away from them; it is getting far too hectic near the food. The food is nothing fancy. Some spring rolls and chicken legs in small plastic cups. Very smelly. The manager is asking the waiters not to give it away to the same crowd and to also serve people who are gambling. They have to raise their trays very high in order to avoid the scroungers on the way. The rest of the crowd playing around the gambling tables has not shown any interest whatsoever in the event and has kept playing the whole way through, unperturbed.

While there is little interest in joining the new Punto Banco table, a huge crowd of Chinese people is getting highly excited around the slot machines. What is going on? An old Chinese man has just won £400 by just playing a 10p coin. Everyone has to take a look at the machine, touch it, sit on the chair and talk about it. This attracts far more interest than the new Celestial Punto Banco table. At the same time, the two performers of the lion dance are now coming round unmasked to distribute bags of fortune cookies. Each cookie contains a message which is meant to tell you when your lucky time will come. Some Chinese are greedily pursuing the performers to get as many as they can, but none of them are expecting to find out about their luck in the cookies. One Chinese woman in particular gets plenty while flirtatiously teasing the performers. She eats the cookies avidly but disregards totally the messages inside. Each time she has one, it just falls down on the floor, she just doesn't bother picking it up. A few minutes later, she joins the Punto Banco table asking for £200 worth of chips. She is one of the rare members of the crowd who finally sits down to play. The food is quickly eaten and cleaned up. The event was very short. The hectic activity it created has already dissipated with some sporadic chats around the slot machines. The people present for the event seemed to be mostly regulars like community members who would enjoy an event at a social club. The event did not seem to have attracted new customers. Neither does it seem to have piqued the regulars' interest in the Punto Banco table itself. Up to

the final day of my fieldwork, the table still had a very low attendance, which is quite ironic since Punto Banco is thought of as Chinese people's favourite casino game.²²⁵



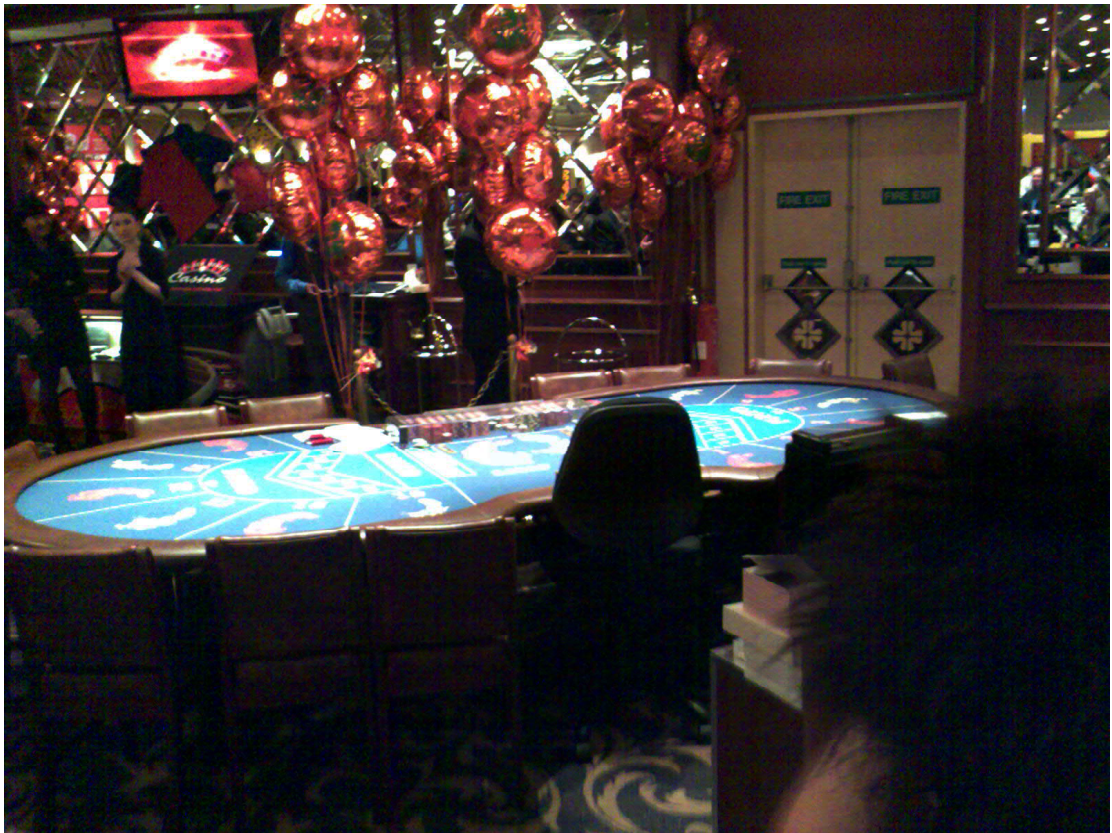
Picture 14: The Lion Dance celebrating the opening of the Celestial Punto Banco table at the Golden Nugget, 15th August 2007.

This event, at the Golden Nugget, comes in striking contrast to the representation of the casino as a place of controlled consumption. This marketing coup is clearly targeting the Chinese population by making the Punto Banco table look more 'Chinese' with an improbable combination of Chinese attributes: dragon and phoenix symbols, lion dance, fortune cookies, and cheap Chinese food.²²⁶ However, the casino's idea of what is 'Chineseness' and what would please Chinese customers clashes with the reasons why

225 It is the most popular game by far in Macau. In 2009, Baccarat gaming tables made up an impressive 105,332,000 MOP (a bit less than £8.5 million) of revenue. This represents a large chunk of the total gross gaming revenue 120,383 (a bit less than £9.7 million). See Macau Documentation and Information Centre of the Statistics and Census Service, 2009, www.dsec.gov.mo. 'Barcelona caters to Chinese tastes with Spain's first Novo flying Baccarat', *International Casino Review*, 96, October 2010.

226 At the time of this event, Punto Banco tables were packed at the Napoleons, while it remained strangely quiet in comparison at the Golden Nugget. As I explain in the previous section, there is an increasing competition among the three casinos I describe in this thesis to attract the Chinese population. It seems that two years later this event the Empire has now become the busiest at Punto Banco tables.

Chinese players actually come to hang out in the casino. Visual references to Chinese identity are not as important as the casino likes to believe.



Picture 15: The Celestial Punto Banco table at the Golden Nugget.



Picture 16: Punto Banco table layout.
(Source: www.casinovenetia.it/en/giochi_dettaglio.jsp?id=796&nomeGioco=BLACK JACK)



Picture 17: Phoenix and dragon symbols
(Source:lanamia.xanga.com/564991079/graphics)

What's more, their use of Chinese symbols does not take into account whether they are meaningful or not to their customers. Fortune cookies, for example, are a rather dubious symbol of Chinese identity and can be said to be more an American idea of what is Chinese.²²⁷ What many of the Chinese casino customers I have spoken to really liked in the casino were the complimentary drinks, food and other free perks, better known in the industry as 'comps',²²⁸ basically the something they got for nothing. The Golden Nugget is a favourite for this reason since it serves free coffees, teas and orange juices from the bar at anytime. At the Empire

and the Napoleons, snacks and non-alcoholic drinks are also available when requested from the walking waitresses and if customers are actively playing. Besides these every day settings, the three casinos also run promotions or events, such as the inauguration of a Celestial Punto Banco table, when they offer treats to all customers. Chinese customers know exactly what time a promotion starts and in which casino.

They are not duped though. They know that freebies are just flattery. Ahmei had no illusion that at the end of the day she had already paid for those things with the money she had lost at gambling. She used a very descriptive street-like expression to make her point: '羊毛出在羊身上' *yangmao chuzhai yangshen shang*, literally saying 'the

227 They were originally Japanese and then recuperated by Chinese people in the United States for American customers. They have now spread to other Chinese restaurants in the world as an icon of Chinese culture for non-Chinese. 'Solving a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside a cookie', *New York Times*, 16 January 2008.

228 Under the Gaming Act 1968, customers were not allowed credit and casinos were not allowed to entice them through the door. In that respect, 'comps' were legally supported. In practice 'comps' have actually been tolerated and found to be a necessary by-effect of the industry, as explains Kent-Lemon (1984) when discussing the episode of Arab players and their influence on changing the casino legislation in the 1960s.

sheep's fur comes from the sheep's body' and nowhere else. Ahmei basically meant the drinks and other events are not free, we, gamblers, are paying for them. No wonder she and her friend Song always felt the urge that I should have a complimentary drink at the bar every time they had one. They always made me feel they were treating me, but in a sense they actually were. Ahmei's attitude is reversing the marketing logic of the casino: the free perks are not the carrot that makes her come, they are a due return for the money she has spent in the casino. This attitude also clearly comes across in the description of the Celestial Punto Banco event where Chinese customers are obviously not behaving accordingly with the casino's intentions. On the contrary, they are 'dwelling'²²⁹ (Gray 1999) in the space. By 'dwelling', I mean that they are occupying and manipulating the space of the casino, preferring some objects, the winning slot machine, and discarding others, the Punto Banco table. The crowd is noisy, laughing loudly, shouting at some occasions, and chatting away in a big hubbub. Their attitude is familiar as if they were at home, as if they deserved that treatment. It feels like the place belongs to them. The way they are behaving comes in great contrast to the way the Chinese community in the UK is usually portrayed as quiet and invisible (see Chapter 2).

On the other hand, the casino under the impulse of the Gambling Act 2005 is constantly trying out new marketing strategies to attract the Chinese market. This has created a material environment which is constantly changing. Despite the popularity of inauguration party, the Punto Banco table has remained rather deserted in comparison to the tables at the Empire and Napoleons. It has now been replaced with two small ones, which cater for the same capacity as the previous one and do not have Chinese symbols anymore. Not long after the opening of the Celestial Punto Banco table, the Golden Nugget also started up a table of Pai Gow Poker, a casino game combining a Chinese traditional tile game Pai Gow,²³⁰ and Poker.²³¹ It was quite popular when customers were allowed to play the game 'for free' in order for them and the dealers to learn the

229 'Dwelling' is a concept that Grays (1999) borrows from Heidegger. 'Dwelling' is an active engagement with objects. Out of these social relationships that individuals entertain with the material world space is organized, defined; it takes shape.

230 The name is derived from Cantonese 牌九 *paigow* (*paijiu* in Mandarin).

231 Pai Gow poker is a fairly recent casino game which has been around for the last three decades. It has come about with other variants of Stud poker: Caribbean stud, three card poker and Let It Ride (Eadington 1999: 177). Pai Gow is played with big black dominoes. The aim is to make the highest score possible (with a few exceptions nine is the highest score, and 牌九 *paigow* in Cantonese actually means 'make nine') with two hands of two dominoes (a front and rear hand for each player).

complicated rules. But when they started to run it with real stakes, it did not take off. It has now also disappeared. In July 2009, LCI started a new initiative and launched, for a trial period, both at the Golden Nugget and the Empire, the traditional Chinese tile game Pai Gow, which was a success from the start, claims the LCI Operations Director, Chris Block.²³² In reality, Pai Gow is not so much about financial success for the casino since it is quite a slow game and it targets a narrow group within the Chinese population. Its main purpose is to give Chinese customers another reason to prefer the Empire's premises over the competition.

Omar: 'In itself it's perfect, it was never going to be busy but again we just looked to cater for another market, people that wanted to play that and come here.'

Claire: 'So is it more to attract them here than actually...'

Omar: 'Yeah.'

Margaret: 'It's a game that is more... our customers are quite young and it's more their parents that would play that game but also it's a type of game you feel you get more value for money because you can play a little amount of money and the game can last, it stretches out the game. So they get more you know, a longer playtime with a small amount of money. So again accommodating another market and offering something a bit different from our competitors.'

It is hard to tell how long Pai Gow will last and if it actually will survive among the commonly played games in British casinos. Before the Gambling Act 2005, casinos were restricted to offer seven, and then nine, games to customers.²³³ Beyond this, they could not innovate much. With the Gambling Act 2005, constant innovation has become an industry standard. LCI, with Harrah's long experience in Vegas, is leading the way in that respect, using the Empire as a laboratory. In addition to Pai Gow and the new version of Punto Banco, the Empire, with the Golden Nugget, is also running a trial of Blackjack Switch.²³⁴ Also, two new electronic roulette tables have been introduced, and apparently an electronic crap table is on its way from the United States (it will be the

232 'Pai Gow introduced to UK casinos', *Bluff Europe*, 16 July 2009; www.bluffeurope.com/poker-news/en/Pai-Gow-Introduced-to-UK-Casinos-_5204.aspx.

233 The Gaming Clubs (Bankers' Games) Regulations 1994: Stud Poker and Super Pan 9 were added onto the list of authorised games in a casino.

234 'Blackjack Switch gets approval', *Casino international*, 8 June 2009, www.casinointernational-online.com/news/fullstory.php/aid/1175/Blackjack_Switch_gets_approval.html. Blackjack Switch is a variant version of Blackjack in which players are dealt two hands and can swap the top two cards between hands.

only one in Europe) and the layout is constantly changing to maximise space in favour of gaming. This mindset has been fully assimilated by the Empire's marketing staff.

Omar: 'We're always looking to change things around, maximise our space, always. We're still maximising with a couple more tables next week. We've still got a few spaces which we're looking to change, we're constantly looking to change.'

Margaret: 'And we will be always changing forever.'

Forgetting the less successful episodes of its marketing, the casino likes to justify its actions as a response to the demands of customers. Within this discourse, it conveniently articulates the presence of Chinese people in the casino as a form of community.

'The Golden Nugget is where people come to see their friends from the community. There is a family atmosphere.'²³⁵ (Margaret)

It is true that some Chinese, among whom many are the retired elderly, do use the casino, in the same way they use the McDonald's in Leicester Square, as a meeting place for a chat. More generally, some Chinese people would describe the casino as the equivalent of the pub for them, a general place where they could come to relax on their own and not necessarily meet friends. This is the case for some Chinese restaurant workers and others working in the informal economy who like to come to the casino during a break, on their day off, or after work. Many of those Chinese regulars do not come to the casino by choice but by lack of choice. In reply to an article I posted online about my research among Chinese gamblers in London,²³⁶ a British Born Chinese woman commented:

'I think the culture of Chinese in the casinos has grown through them being some of the only places open for Chinese to go and relax who work in the takeaways and restaurants after they finish work late at night. Yes, there are hardened gamblers who go bankrupt and gamble away their hard-earned money to dire consequences, but for many people, my parents included, it's more like a social club, where there are other people who speak their language.'

²³⁵ It can be noted that with the age restrictions on casino gambling the comment 'family atmosphere' is a bit forced.

²³⁶ See www.dimsum.co.uk/viewpoints/is-gambling-prevalent-among-chinese-people-in-the-uk.html.

Even Ahmei and Ying who are a so-called ‘new migrants’ from Mainland China shared the same feeling, that they were naturally drawn to go to the casino because there was nowhere else to go.

‘Everyday I go and work, it’s hard. It seems the casino is the only place where I can come to relax a bit.’ (Ahmei)

‘Apart from the casino, there is not really a place where we can go and have a bit of fun.’ (Ying)

As Ying explains further, being in the casino compensates for the loneliness he feels outside thanks to the ‘familiar look’ he finds inside:

‘You can see many Chinese there and sometimes you’ll even have a chat’.

However, this type of sociality that Ying talks about must be carefully detached from a romantic appeal for community (Miranda 2002). First of all, the way that Chinese people play, visit regularly, or not, a casino, socialise, spend time and money in a casino, and make use of the space is, without surprise, very diverse and cannot be generalised. In line with my general argument about ‘Chineseness’ in Chapter 2, it is noticeable in the casinos that Chinese gamblers come from all walks of life. This means that their relationship with the space of the casino and its importance to them varies greatly.

Little Yi, an elderly man originally from Macao spends mornings to evenings, Mondays to Sundays in the casino. In a single day, he goes from betting shops to a casino and from one casino to another one. Everybody knows him and he knows everyone. The casino is not just his second home but his only home since Little Yi is homeless. Needless to say, Little Yi rarely gambles. He is inexhaustible, though, about how one can win at gambling. He proudly maintains his image of expert that he always feels the need to emphasise in my presence. One day, I witness him losing at blackjack in a few games. He is obviously furious about this and has to justify that it is all the fault of the woman that came up to play next to him. She changed the deal of the infallible logic of his winning strategy. Last time I spoke to him, Little Yi had been expelled from the Golden Nugget, his main base. He could not give me a clear and coherent explanation of what happened, and seemed deeply upset about the situation. The way Little Yi uses the space of the casino contrasts with Kevin’s. Kevin, a British Born Chinese, mainly comes to the Empire at weekends to accompany his Chinese Vietnamese friend, Liu.

Kevin is not a big fan of casino gambling but his friend is, so he comes along. Despite this, Kevin does not mind losing £400 in one night, he'll be annoyed a bit for sure, but he could have easily spent the money on a dinner with some friends at a restaurant, so no big deal. It is not that surprising when one works as an accountant for a bank in the City and earns over £80,000 a year. In comparison with Kevin for whom the casino is a place among many others he could have chosen to go to have fun, Little Yi has found in the space of the casino a *raison d'être*, and experiences being banned from his main base with anxiety. The way Chinese people use the casino changes depending on their economic and social circumstances.

Sociality in the casino does not require strong and durable connections with other visitors; neither does it always require proximity, physical or verbal communication. Although it is true that some Chinese do come and use the casino to meet and hang out with their friends, some come and purposely avoid interacting with others. Yuan Ting, for example, when he gambled regularly, liked to go to the casino alone.

'I liked to go to the casino on my own, with no friends. I didn't want any friends with me, because when I gambled, I liked to gamble quietly, no matter if I was winning or losing, I played attentively, I played the game attentively. If there were some friends with me, they would disturb me, disturb my thinking. So I would say, I wanted nobody when I gambled, [I wanted] no one else, no friends staying by my side and watching me play. I just didn't like anyone staying by my side and watching me. Because I was very focused when I gambled, I liked to play quietly, very, very attentively, just like that.'

Mr Tang, a 87 years old man originally from Shanghai, was one of the elderly men who were wandering alone in the casino, who would sometimes bet a few pounds of their pension²³⁷ on the slot machines or the red and black at roulette, and who would other times sit quietly in a corner. I had a conversation with him one day when he explained he had flown from Shanghai to Hong Kong in 1949 and from there came to the UK. He worked as a chef in a restaurant during all those years in the UK but has now lost his wife and family because of gambling. He was not keen to give more details and avoided me for the rest of my fieldwork as if he had never spoken to me. The casino, he explained that one time I spoke with him, was the only place he had left to go. So even

237 Most of the elderly people I met in the casino get the Basic State Pension. The rates from April 2010 are per week: £97.65 for a single person and £156.15 for a married couple.

if he had not much money and if he had already lost everything as a result of gambling he thought it was still worth coming. At least he was not as foolish and impulsive as when he was younger, now he played only small stakes. Social obligations in a casino are much looser, and even if Mr Tang had talked to me once about his life, he judged it totally normal not to speak to me in the future. All my interactions with other casino goers were equally marked by episodic friendly conversations which might or might not be acknowledged on a different day or in a different place. This loose sense of social connections is not exclusive to the space of the casino (Amit 2002, Amit & Rapport 2002, Granovetter 1983). It is though particularly striking there and echoes in that respect similar ethnographic observations made about the betting shop (Cassidy forthcoming) and the bingo hall (Mann 2003). Mann, for example, explains how the bingo hall is wrongly characterised ‘as a place to socialise rather than to win money’ (2003: 18):

‘The perceived separateness of the bingo hall from the ‘ordinary world’ would seem to make a particular kind of social interaction, one which, contrary to common perceptions of bingo life, promotes anonymity and impersonality. (...) For some, the bingo hall is a place to enjoy solitude, for others it is a place demanding discretion about personal matters, a place only for superficial friendship and riddled with unspoken social codes, fads and judgments.’ (2003: 17-18)

It is easy to lose track of gamblers, and there is no expectation to meet your ‘gambling friends’ outside the casino, on the contrary. Ahmei, when I first knew her would always only give me a vague meeting in the casino, at other times we would miss each other. As many others, she would also pretend to be too busy and not to have the time to meet with me when I called her. In the end, I lost track of her for a good few months to luckily bump into her again in the Empire. Although Ahmei was unusually open and talkative in comparison to most of the other gamblers, it took me a lot of patience and stamina to get a recorded interview with her. Sociality in the casino, like in the betting shop (Cassidy forthcoming), is quite characteristic. It is temporally and spatially defined and can be said to take the form of a ‘contextual fellowship’ (Amit & Rapport 2002: 5) with less social obligations, or rather more distinctive, than in some other spaces since the non-recognition of bonds is actively accepted at times. In that sense, it is more pertinent to understand the nature of social interactions in the casino in terms of duration.



Picture 18: Elderly Chinese man sitting in silence in the corner of the Golden Nugget's bar area, near the door, hidden away from the rest of the casino crowd behind a big plant.

Social interactions in the casino reflect the dynamism of its space. They tend to be minimal, ephemeral, and unstable. The space of the casino is not unique in that respect: all spaces have elements of stability and instability (Crang 2001). What the casino does is that it takes this a bit further. It has a greater sense of fragility which reflects the fact

that experiences of migration and urban spaces are traversed by constant changes and that experiences of time are different from one individual to another. In the next section, I examine in greater detail how an understanding of the casino space is inseparable from an observation of time as a lived experience.

Who needs a clock when gambling in a casino?

We have seen in the previous sections that the casino uses different marketing strategies to attract Chinese customers and creates certain kinds of spaces and practices. In this section, I explain how a concern with space necessarily intersects with time. A famous manual *Designing Casinos to Dominate the Competition* (Friedman 2000) demonstrates the value of a low-ceilinged, dimly-lit micro-niches' approach in order to optimise gaming-area construction. It argues that people are likely to linger longer in such cosy, understated, obscure spaces than in more garish, harsh, open, and illuminated ones. The idea is not so much to make visitors feel comfortable so they will spend more time, but to make them feel comfortable in a way that they will spend time as well as money. The design of corridors or carpet alleys is, for example, believed to prevent the customer from engaging with the gaming floor by keeping him to the path traced ahead (Friedman 2000). What a successful casino design needs to achieve is to make visitors forget that time is passing. That is why casinos are built with the idea that they are havens of peace away from the rhythms of the external world. The removal of clocks is the most noticeable feature of this temporal manipulation while the use of chips, 'with no exchange value outside the casino', is a subtler one (Reith 2002: 142,144). Raymond explains what time feels like in a casino from the point of view of a dealer.

'You know constantly you thought 'So what's the weather like? What is like out there, is it still nice? Is it raining?' You just didn't know because you had no outside point of reference. One day one guy said 'Oh, it's pouring with snow outside', I was like 'Shut up!'. I go outside it was snowing, I couldn't believe it. So we didn't know, you just didn't know, you're insulated from outside influence... partly external world. Not in all clubs though, when I was at the Clermont,²³⁸ we had lovely big Georgian windows looking up

238 See earlier description of select casinos in Mayfair.

the Berkeley Square, but basically in main big casinos no point of reference outside. No clocks, no windows.'

Casinos are very similar to enclosed shopping malls which in contrast to the experience of shopping in the streets, suspend space, time, weather and reality (Crawford 2000 [1992]). This point must be, of course, nuanced in light of geographical and social differences as highlighted in Raymond's quote with the example of the Clermont, a 'Mayfair casino'. Also, to a lesser degree than theme parks (Sorkin 1992a, 1992b) and Vegas-style casinos (Henderson 1999), casinos in London offer a less pronounced suspension of reality, portraying an ideal world of luxury and abundance where money is all what one wants, rather than another reality.

The social discipline of time is particularly evident in the casino in the rhythm set by dealing. Keeping the speed of the game at a fast pace is a skill that the casino management expects from its dealers. Raymond, an experienced dealer, explains how the casino has embodied the profit-making goals of the casino in its dealing of roulette:

'When there is heavy chips action, it is much more enjoyable to you, you use your head a lot, you use your hands a lot more, and you know you have to deal at speed. We call it 'spin rate'. The effect being that, the faster you spin the more income you generate, because you know each spin of the wheel generates a certain amount of income. So you aim to get a spin every 45-50 seconds, at least. And then, that way, you keep profits on. Well, a good croupier can do that, but if you have a poor croupier the spin rate drops. So if your spin rate drops down by 15 seconds, therefore you know every three spin you've lost a spin because a good croupier will get a spin rate in every 45 seconds, a poor croupier might get a spin rate of every 60 seconds. The other thing with a poor dealer is that you get swamped. The action on the table builds up to an extent where it takes so long to pay out the bets that you get like a load jam system where your spin rate really drops down.'

What management is really looking for, though, it is not just a skilled dealer who knows how to deal at a fast pace but a dealer that also gives enough time to its customers to place their bets. In this regard, the best dealer will not be the fastest but the one who knows how to manage an adequate rhythm between these two criteria. Derek, who worked both as a croupier and as a manager and now trains a new generation of dealers, is well aware of this nuance which he describes as reaching the right 'balance' between speed and time to bet.

‘Yes the more spin per hour the more profit, but there is little point in the dealer banging the ball down the roulette wheel, if it doesn’t give time to the customer to bet. It’s about giving a sort of a balance, giving the customer sort of enough time but not too much time. You know equally you don’t want the customers haven’t got their bets down or them going round the casino because the dealer hasn’t spun the ball yet. So it’s about getting that balance and that’s what customers are really looking for.’

Schüll (2005, 2006) has demonstrated that a similar manipulation of space and time takes place through the design of digital gaming machines in the casino in order to accelerate the extraction of money from players. Gambling machines are designed ‘to accelerate gaming productivity’, the capacity to place a large number of wagers in a minimum amount of time, and ‘to maximise ‘time on device’ or TOD (2005: 66-67). This mechanical acceleration of time means that, in Las Vegas where Schüll carried out fieldwork, ‘experienced players play up to 900 hands an hour’ (2005: 67), far more than the average of 60 games an hour at a casino roulette table that I described in Chapter 3.²³⁹ Schüll argues that this design performativity colludes with gamblers’ desire to enter what they describe the ‘zone’.²⁴⁰

‘Game industry technology engineers design machines that facilitate the zone state compulsive gamblers describe, enabling them to forge an insulated, autonomous space of play in which they can set and reset their own bet level, rhythm, and pace. The tempo they establish functions as a form of predictability that structures and regulates their play, promising to hold them in the zone state as long as they hold its rhythm, no matter how fast they go.’ (2006: 233)

However, the ‘zone’, as I argue in Chapter 3, should not be seen as a uniform or neutral timespace constructed in opposition to those outside the casino. This opposition makes timespaces outside the casino dense with relations. The zone, on the contrary, becomes empty of them. The way Chinese casino players experience time is better understood through the concept of rhythm since bodily actions take shape in a unique movement for

239 It is to be noted that gaming machines are more prevalent in Las Vegas than in the UK since casinos established under the Gaming Act 1968 are limited to a maximum number of 20 machines per premises categories B to D or any number of C or D machines instead, and there are not yet any casino open under the new licenses (large casinos are limited to a maximum of 150 machines with any combination of machines in category B or D within the total limit of 150 (subject to machine/table ratio) and small casinos are limited to a maximum of 80 machines with any combination of machines in category B or D within the total limit of 80 (subject to machine/table ratio)). See Appendix D detailing the maximum stake and prize for each machine category. In some ways therefore, this kind of play is a practice distinctive to both Las Vegas and also Victoria, Australia, where a particular matrix of regulation, technology and desire is combined (Woolley & Livingstone 2009).

240 The ‘zone’ state is described in more detail in Chapter 3.

each individual gambler. The Chinese gamblers who contributed to my research are not passively submitting to the spatio-temporal boundaries set by the casino, and are in fact participating in the temporal pattern provided by the casino via the dealer to create their own rhythm. As a matter of fact, most casino gamblers do not generally like a slow pace and will resent having their rhythm slowed down by an inexperienced player who takes time to place his bets. Any interference to their own rhythm is usually perceived to be of great annoyance and rare are gamblers who like to be talked to when they are rolling in action. This point was earlier expressed by Yuan Ting who did not like to come to the casinos with friends since they were likely to disturb his concentration when he was gambling. As it has been explained in Chapter 3, gamblers are fully immersed in the flow of their own actions where money becomes a means to an end and stopping gambling is inevitably problematic. In effect, each gambler is following his/her own rhythm independently and in parallel with others; interactions are limited. As observed by the artists Jane and Louise Wilson in their work about Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas, there are 'different experiences of time, different speeds' taking place in a same casino and at the same time (Millar & Doherty 2000: 22). This multitude of actions and temporalities first gives the impression of a visual cacophony and of chaos, in the likes of swarming city. In order to make sense of this disorder, I take inspiration from Laurier's phenomenological analysis of coffee shops in Scotland (2008). By taking a close and systematic look at the daily rhythms which run through the space of different coffee shops, Laurier demonstrates how urban dwellers are actively partaking through the '*colonisation* of breakfast [in] a particular mode of production and consumption relations' (2008: 120, original emphasis). These movements reflect the kinds of sociality that are promoted or hindered in urban spaces. This phenomenological perspective can also be applied to casinos in London where loose assemblages of people, processes and machines generate diversity from shared resources and communicate difference using mutually recognised techniques and embodied practices.

The simultaneous actions of individuals at a roulette table illustrate the entanglement of activity constantly taking place in the casino. One day, I decide to note down everything that goes on at a specific roulette table in the middle of the afternoon. I chose a table that has a Chinese dealer and is pretty quiet to start with. There is a young Chinese player with some yellow £1 chips, but he's not playing right now, just waiting. The dealer throws the ball a few times in the meantime without any player betting. It doesn't

take long, though, before the action on the table takes off again. The Chinese player places his yellow chips, in pack, on one single number each, and 13 chips each time. Out of 10 times, he would mainly play only 13 chips. Very precise. The pattern of his betting layout is also very tidy. He chooses either to gather his chips in the higher or lower numbers sections, only a few times he chooses the middle one. His favourite seems to be the higher numbers section. His precision, order, and regularity, make him stand out. From time to time, he also plays £5 chips, mainly on the colour bets. He is accompanied by his girlfriend who keeps an eye on the money he wins, and happily grabs it whenever he does. The couple do not talk to each other much but the girl is patiently waiting by his side while he is gambling in silence. While this Chinese man is playing, other people come to play for a bit at the table, but no one stays for long. Wearing trendy looking clothes and spectacles, another young Chinese man keeps coming back to the table, going back and forth to other tables he is playing at the same time. He only plays £5 chips and hands out several £100 chips to get more single chips of £5. His style is bolder, with inevitably higher chances of returns and losses, and consists of betting four or five numbers only, no more, and at least £10-15 and up to £100 per number. He also has a liking for neighbour bets.²⁴¹ He gets lucky once or twice, but no more. In fact, most of the time he loses what he has. Every time he loses all his chips, he asks for more. Although, at first sight, he seems to be playing on his own, he is in fact accompanied by two friends who are, in the meantime, like many others, watching the football match on the big screen. An Indian man also joins in on the table. His style of displaying the chips comes in great contrast to the Chinese player with the yellow chips. Instead of grouping the chips in a corner he leaves the space of one number in between each numbers he bets on. He follows another pattern of his own. Another man comes quickly after him. This one displays the chips in a more spread out way, and occasionally, he bets on a number that he surrounds by four other bets directly adjacent to the first bet, forming a flower shape. He repeats this pattern several times. Another player appears discreetly a few times. He only plays the dozen numbers bets, placing two £100 chips on two out of the three cases for dozen numbers. Then, one Vietnamese man comes to the table, changes £70 for £1 chips, and plays the whole lot on single numbers in a flamboyant fashion, betting a small pile of £1 chips for each

²⁴¹ Neighbour bets are bets on a number series, that is to say a section of the roulette wheel. They pay five times the announced stake (see picture 19 below).

number. This style always looks quite impressive because of the pile-shape bets take, giving the impression that the gambler is playing more money than he actually is. In that one game, the Vietnamese man loses everything and goes straight back to hanging out with his friend by the bar. All these different actions happen at the same roulette table, more or less at the same time, in less than 20 minutes. In this description, it becomes clear that each player is absorbed in his own flow of actions creating his own temporality which is mutually defining.



Picture 19: Neighbour bets
(Source: www.whichlivedealer.com/live-roulette)

Like the description of urban rhythms by Lefebvre (2004 [1992]), each casino is the assemblage of different beats, a collision of multiple temporalities in dissolution, fragmentation and reformation, coming together in a concrete space. Each casino is a place constantly re-appropriated through temporary use. Like a city, a casino can be seen as a 'chronotope', a unity of time and place under the collision of all those different rhythms (Crang 2001). In that respect, the micro-description of the different actions taking place at a given roulette table at a specific time illustrates the fact that time is never singular or uniform stretching over a uniform space (Thrift & May 2001). The difference of the casino with other spaces is that the representation and the coordination of time as a unique rhythm which binds everybody is purposely made absent. It is constructed in opposition to spaces of work, family or even leisure where time is clearly shaped and enacted through various systems of social discipline. In those

contexts, time is often expressed as important and not to be wasted uselessly, because time after all is worth money (see Chapter 3). In the casino, the gambler is not so much encouraged to forget that time is passing by, but that time is precisely money, a way to make one's time productive. For this purpose, the casino is using subtle techniques which are disciplining and controlling the different rhythms of the gamblers without references to a common universal time and its measuring instruments. The dealer plays a central role in that process by orchestrating, in the case of roulette, the different rhythms of the players, by a turn of the wheel and a throw of the ball. Under the appearance of being unconstrained, the space of the casino is constructed on the assumption that timekeeping and time-management are external to the individual, regulated by a universal, linear and progressive time that we are all forced to follow. From this reasoning, the deliberate absence of time confinement is thought to lose the gambler in order to better manipulate him/her. This is obviously missing the point that gamblers are adept time and space makers. For many, the casino is very attractive for this reason, it is a place that they can shape as theirs and where their actions are not regulated by the imperatives of time, that is to say the working routine and the need to invest in the present to construct an imagined future. However, this attraction for the space of the casino cannot be understood in isolation from the other 'TimeSpaces' (Thrift & May 2001), that is to say other spaces and the different temporalities that individuals experience through dwelling in those places, which gamblers are also shaping and being shaped by. As we have seen in the previous section, some Chinese gamblers have access to other social spaces while others are more restricted. Not all of them have the ability to freely choose how to use their time and in which space, and this has a great influence on the role the casino space plays in their lives, and what kind of role it has.

Conclusion

As I have shown, the freedoms and restrictions placed on individuals are combined with the architecture of casinos in London which have developed under highly specific historical and regulatory circumstances. This contrasts rather starkly with the best known casino landscape: Las Vegas. Built with the symbol of Las Vegas as a model, the space of the casino tends to be seen and imagined as static. This is very much symptomatic of architecture which 'attempts in its conceptual genesis to freeze time'

(Till 1996: 9). In fact, the bodies in interaction with the material world at hand are not just moving through space and time, they are making it.

‘[O]bjects and subjects come to shape each other not just *in* space and time but *through* *defining* space and time’ (Crang 2001)

Because of its disconnection with the rhythm of everyday life the casino creates a space where gamblers can in turn create and be in charge of their own actions and rhythms, away from the ones they are sucked in to outside. This makes it an attractive place for people constantly on the move, in transience in their life, going through an uncertain time or still haunted by the so-called temporary project of migration. Besides this, the three casinos where I carried out fieldwork are also marketing their space with the Chinese community in mind. And indeed, many Chinese do come and occupy their premises on a regular basis, reinforcing the intention of the management. However, Chinese people do not simply fall into the trap of ethnic marketing. The space that those three casinos create becomes for them an opportunity to express their sense of self as a Chinese person in London. Certain Chinese appropriate this space as their own, others have a more temporary relationship with it and do not want to be assimilated to a group of Chinese people. For the latter, the casino does not play a role of refuge since their life contains enough fulfilment. The former, who have restricted access to other spaces in the UK, are re-negotiating their Chinese identity wherever they can. The casino is one of those places. It is a place where they can buy the momentary freedom of being someone who has the power to spend money. The way Chinese gamblers make use of the casino in London is directly linked to how financially able each gambler is and to the type of spaces they have access to outside.

However, for both those who are financially successful and those who have failed to be, the casino is still an attractive place to challenge the time pressure of being someone by making money. The casino is a space where action is not regulated by the imperatives of production or of an imagined future. It is a place where the gambler can forget about measuring time, where the sense of expectation and memory are put on hold in order to better enjoy being and existing in time and where the rhythm of time is dictated by the individual’s bodily actions. The enjoyment of this freedom of action varies from one individual to another since each of them is made out of a distinctive array of differentiated experiences of time and space. Each individual is exposed through the path of their life course to a variety of spaces and tempos that share some elements with

others but remains unique to them. This idiosyncratic repertory of experiences builds up a singular sense of space and time that continues to evolve through other life events and circumstances that the individual experiences. The space of the casino comes to life under the actions of these varied intentions, in the constellation of these different temporalities which are coming together in a concrete space. As such, the casino is a place in flux which creates opportunities for Chinese gamblers to re-invent what it means to be Chinese in London.

Chapter 6

Winning today and tomorrow: the constant quest for luck in the casino

‘Un coup de dés jamais n’abolira le hasard’
(A throw of dice will never abolish chance)

Mallarmé (1976: 457-477)

Recent studies addressing the issue of gambling prevalence among the Chinese populations of Montreal, Singapore, Hong Kong, Brisbane (Australia) and Sydney tend to present the belief in luck and other superstitious behaviours as common Chinese cultural values which, among other factors, create a favourable ground for problem gambling and its maintenance (Arthur et al. 2008: 452, Blaszczynski, Huynh, Dumlao, Farrell 1998, Hong & Chiu 1988, Oei & Raylu 2009, Papineau 2005, Zheng, Walker & Blaszczynski 2009). These studies understand Chinese people to be misled by the belief that fate or chance primarily determines events (Papineau 2005) and/or by the belief that they can control outcomes they have demonstrably no influence over (Hong & Chiu 1988). This, however, was not confirmed in my research where Chinese gamblers expressed a great skepticism towards luck expressed in those terms. As a result, in this chapter, I open up this question and ask what singular understanding of luck this argument assumes and how my data gathered from Chinese casino players brings it into question.

In these studies of gambling prevalence, Chinese people are described as having a common understanding of luck without taking into account historical, geographical, social and economic differences between and within various Chinese populations. This contrasts with the conflicting attitudes towards luck I observed in the casino. To Ahmei, who grew up in Communist China, the superstitious beliefs of her Chinese Malaysian friend, Song, sounded silly. She would laugh at Song for telling her not to touch her shoulder while she was playing as this brings bad luck. The fact that Song would never eat anything while gambling for the sole aim of avoiding bad luck was equally alien and a source of mockery to Ahmei. Besides these different attitudes towards luck, gambling studies do not consider that the notion itself is problematic. In contemporary Chinese

(Raphals 2003)²⁴² and in some other languages (see Daniels 2003 about the notion of luck in Japanese and Raphals 2003 in ancient Greek), luck has a very rich semantic field open to a variety of interpretations, which engenders ‘the problem of *what to call it* or *how to know it*’ (Wagner 2008: 12, original emphasis). This came up very clearly in my discussions with different individuals since what luck was seemed to change shape across the eyes of beholders and over time.

As the historical work of Lee and Campbell (1997) brilliantly reminds us, I believe that the orientalisising discourse of luck in these studies takes us away from what luck really talks about: social mobility and inequalities in accessing it. That is why, in this chapter I want to ‘de-exoticise’ the concept of luck to unveil how it is representative of the morality of wealth acquisition in the context of a capitalist economy and how the means by which wealth is acquired constitute individuals. For this purpose, I argue that the common understanding of luck as an external agency beyond human control is restrictive; it is more pertinent to consider it as a constant desire to exert agency despite the numerous and uneven difficulties in doing so. This more integrative perspective on luck enables me to expose the shortcomings of the argument that luck is an irrational belief that makes you more vulnerable to gambling. The condemnation of gambling as irrational reflects the working of a morality of worth where the means by which money is accumulated are prescriptive of how deserving the individual is. Hard work is praised, luck reprobated. However, this separation between work and luck is blurring, unraveling the reality that Chinese people in London are not equal before luck. In that context, gambling in the casino offers the opportunity to experience luck on a regular and temporary basis, in spite of the spatio-temporal limitations of one’s life.

The discussion of my argument starts by considering ideas about luck, fortune and fate, focusing particularly on the distinction between ‘good luck’ and ‘moral luck’. I then explore how those ideas operate among Christian problem gambling treatment providers and casino players in London in order to demonstrate how winning out of luck destabilizes a morality of success and achievement based on hard work, reward and a linear progression of time. Following this, I demonstrate that, despite promoting the idea of egalitarianism, luck is in fact experienced unequally among Chinese people in

242 Raphals lists a variety of terms which refer to luck and explains the specificity of their meanings in details: fortune (云 *yun*), happiness (幸 *xing*), risk-taking (冒险 *maoxian*), chance (巧 *qiao*), randomness (随机 *suiji*) (2003: 552).

London, reflecting social, economic and age differences. In contrast, sheltered from the capricious flow of luck in the course of one's life, the casino offers Chinese gamblers a controlled environment in which to exert their agency through exposure to constant opportunities to grab luck.

The ambivalent nature of luck: between fixity and mobility

Luck in Western philosophy is mainly referred to as unpredictable events which happen beyond the control of human agency and which can equally be good or bad (Statman 1993). Without undermining the value of this tradition, I would like to suggest in this chapter, in line with Lackey's (2008) criticisms, that the emphasis on its uncontrollable and unpredictable character is insufficient to understand luck. Using the Japanese distinction exposed by Reader and Tanabe, I want to look at the fact that two types of luck, which are not exclusive from one another, can be distinguished: 'good luck' (*kōun*), 'a lucky break that just happens without any cause or deliberate effort' and 'moral luck' (*kaiun*) which requires a certain degree of human intentionality and effort to be acquired (1998: 110).²⁴³ This distinction will help me to disentangle what my interlocutors talk about when they mention luck and to open up what luck means in a wider semantic field.

Within anthropological accounts of specific contexts in Mongolia (Buyandelgeriyn 2007, Empson forthcoming), Japan (Daniels 2003, Reader & Tanabe 1998), China (Harrel 1989, Liu 2009, Sangren 2008, Steinmüller 2009, Zhang 2010) and Calcutta's Chinese community (Oxfeld 1993) luck, along with the notions of fate and fortune, is mainly seen as a pragmatic way to deal with the human dilemma to act in a world which is not always within the grasp of human control. The cases referring to Chinese culture seem to particularly emphasise the use of fate and luck as post-hoc explanations of why planned outcomes were or were not fulfilled. In that respect, fate and luck help individuals to cope and adapt to the uncertainty of the future unfolding in the present. As first noted by Harrel (1989) and Oxfeld (1993) when an individual has made his best

243 Not to be confused with the concept of 'moral luck' in philosophy which emerged through a discussion between Williams (1993 [1976]) and Nagel (1993 [1976]) in opposition to Kant's idea that morality is immune from luck. Both Williams and Nagel debate that individuals can sometimes be held morally responsible for actions they performed by accident despite the fact that a significant aspect of what they are assessed for depends on factors that were beyond their control.

efforts, has followed moral values and is still facing failure, fate remains the only explanation possible. In that case, failure is read as the sign ‘that there is more than one agency at work in the world, and sometimes human effort is simply not enough’ (Harrell 1989: 99). This explanation avoids calling into question the personal ability of the individual to reach achievement, and as such, it can be argued that it is particularly salient in situations where anxiety about what is going to happen next (Stafford 2007) and high expectations of success are present, such as in the case of my research (see Chapter 4). Luck, fate, and fortune are ways to make unexpected outcomes meaningful. With the sudden arrival of wealth in China, these terms are becoming useful explanations of the economic disparities it engenders (Liu 2009: 126, Zhang 2010).

While both fate and fortune share with luck its unpredictable and uncontrollable nature, they do not refer to the same temporalities. Fate concerns an individual’s life duration from the beginning to the end, luck refers to a shorter period of time, which can consist of several years to a few seconds (see Harrell 1989: 100). The reasons why they are uncertain are different. Fate will never be totally known until the end of one’s life (1989); luck is ‘fundamentally transitory or sporadic’ and must be grasped when it comes about (Howland 2001: 16). That is why, with luck, the unpredictability of life constantly has to be reinterpreted as events unfold.

‘An apparent ‘big break’ can lead into a slough of misfortune; a bitter disappointment can open a path of possibility. The only good is ‘so far, so good.’’ (Lears 2003: 16)

Fortune is in between: it has the ability to harness luck over a longer period of time and not be affected by its constant vagaries (Empson forthcoming, Zhang 2010).²⁴⁴ The capricious temporality of luck is most relevant to my research context since, when gambling, actors experience a multitude of small events. This implies that for each new gambling event the previous outcome (of winning or losing) can potentially be reversed (see Chapter 3).

Like the residents of Ploughshare (Harrel 1989) and Lanying villages (Zhang 2010), and like Chinese businessmen in Calcutta (Oxfeld 1993), Chinese casino players practice a pragmatic attitude in the face of unexpected outcomes. The difference is that when they

244 Zhang does not use the word ‘fortune’ as such but alludes to it through a discussion about auspiciousness that she describes as an inner quality of the individual which has the potential to sustain luck for a longer period of time.

are gambling they do this on a far more frequent basis than in other life situations where the outcomes of their actions take longer to be known (see Chapter 4). As such, luck, as an explanation of an external force that they cannot influence, is frequently invoked when they are losing. Failure to win never seems to be the gambler's fault. Instead, the culprit is always bad luck, created by the uncontrollable actions of someone or something else. This appears clearly in Dan's explanation.²⁴⁵ He would rather carry out superstitious acts even if he does not really believe in luck, than accept that he does not have the skills to win.

‘When I play mahjong and I’m losing I like to push my chair back, like that, or to suddenly go, like that, nod the head back. It’s because there is evil spirits around you so you have to make sudden movements to knock them out of the way. I don’t believe in any of this, I don’t even believe in ghosts, stuff like that, but I would do those stupid things because I can’t be that bad luck, where that bad luck comes from? You know, because in gambling you can mathematically work things out. And sometimes you’re thinking that card coming out at that time it’s so impossible but it still happens. So you’re thinking ‘Oh my god no that’s not right, that’s unlucky, something, you know, something bad luck’ and then you know, it’s never your fault. With gamblers it’s never the gamblers’ fault it’s always... or it’s the cards, or it’s the atmosphere, the lighting, ‘The people I was playing they were stupid idiots they didn’t know how to play cards right that’s why I lost, it wasn’t because I was bad’. That’s how it is.’

In contrast to this narrative of bad luck, winning is rarely a matter of luck, or if it is, it is because of the gambler's actions and talent. Like Reader & Tanabe's patchinko players (1998) and Hayano's poker players (1982), for many Chinese casino players in London ‘only losing is a matter of luck’, ‘winning is due to skilful effort’ (Reader & Tanabe 1998: 108). When a gambler wins, luck is ‘moral luck’, that is to say the result of acting at the right time and a sign of personal ability to make the correct decisions and put them into action. As Hayano (1982) notes, in that case, luck is considered to be a skill.

‘Ironically, a player is considered skilful if he can attract good luck and use it to profitable ends’ (1982: 64)

When gamblers lose, it is the working of ‘good luck’, that is to say an external force that the individual has no control over to prevent the occurrence of unwanted outcomes.

²⁴⁵ Also see Little Yi's account of a game he lost in Chapter 5 for another example of bad luck explanation.

This differentiation allows Chinese casino players not to question their ability to win in the future and to keep carrying on playing the game. Luck is not what happens unplanned but is in fact what gamblers wish and expect for themselves; being lucky is never a surprise, only being unlucky is.

‘One does not play the lottery for what one *needs*, but for what one *wants*, and *wanting* is like a conspicuously empty place in the shape of one’s desires.’ (Wagner 2008: 10, original emphasis)

Beyond gambling situations, because luck can be both an agency which dictates the course of events beyond human control and which can be influenced by human action, discussions about it were often a befuddling struggle and always seemed to leave me with a more obscure idea of what luck was. The confusion also came from the fact that my interlocutors would refer to these two aspects by using terms other than luck, which were more relevant to who they were and to their life circumstances in each case. The division between ‘good luck’ and ‘moral luck’ is particularly helpful to disentangle how the two aspects of luck are articulated in these different discourses. It shows that relying on ‘good luck’ is not sufficient since ‘it may never grace one’s path’ (Reader & Tanabe 1998: 110), as Ahmei bitterly expresses in what follows, and since it diminishes the role of the individual as agent. That is why the idea of ‘moral luck’ is necessary. It provides the hope, which in the case of Lewis is being fulfilled, that the happenstance of luck can be created by human deliberation and not by chance alone.

For Lewis, luck does not exist as such, ‘it’s about chance, probability, it’s not luck’. His narrative of events unfolding as a result of a random selection instead of luck is a way to emphasise the scope of his agency as an individual. Acknowledging that events are not determined by a supernatural emanation but randomly happen, allows him to stress his ability to apply the laws of probability with which he calculates and makes decisions in the face of unpredictability. His knowledge of probability, he explains, is a tool he has learnt to master in his job as a trader in order to ‘analyse the risk that brings back the best reward’. He also believes that the skills he has acquired as a trader make him a more astute and disciplined gambler (and, as such, implicitly more likely to win than other gamblers). Lewis’ discourse echoes Ming epic narratives which talk of fate as a way to affirm narrators’ agency since the transcendental and creative force of fate becomes alive through their words (Sangren 2005). Ming writers’ narratives of fate are reflective of their time, as is Lewis’ celebration of probability. It is symptomatic of the

era he is in, that of the ‘age of chance’ (Reith 2002), in which the capricious laws of uncertainty are now believed to rule the world in place of fate and divine intervention, and which with the right tools and attitude can be manipulated to make profit (Zaloom 2004, 2006 and also see Chapter 1). Lewis’ discourse speaks of the fact that China has put a new mantel on, that of scientific and market rationality leaving behind the old rag of deterministic and utopian reasoning which governed during the Maoist years (Liu 2009)

Ahmei does not believe in luck either, but not for the same reason. For her, there is no point in believing in luck since she has never experienced much of it in her life. To illustrate this she recalls her first experience of work in a factory unit (单位 *danwei*) at a time when China was not as economically prosperous as it is now. Her youth, the time opportunity, was tarnished by financial difficulties and the struggle to eke out a living. She had to survive with a salary of about 50 RMB (£10) a month and to rely on the solidarity of her co-workers in order to borrow money. At least she succeeded in providing better opportunities for her daughter who now has a bright future ahead of her with a British residency and a degree in accountancy from a British college (see Chapter 2). Ahmei has some pride as a mother but at the same time she knows that her daughter’s achievements and future are not hers; her daughter’s luck is not hers. This does not mean though that she does not believe in herself and in her own ability to be a winner. As she explains herself, ‘[i]f I didn’t believe in myself what would I go to the casino for?’.

For Ahmei, ‘good luck’ has not been very good but she still hopes at least to get some ‘moral luck’, by gambling. Her situation differs from Lewis who has so far enjoyed a fairly good amount of both ‘good’ and ‘moral’ luck, although his discourse tends to ellipse ‘good luck’ and focus more on his ability to create luck. The distinction between those two aspects of luck is not just relevant to the gambling context, it also resonates with how individuals progress or do not progress in life between fixity and movement across space and time. In turn, the clarification of this difference will be a useful tool to question the way luck is constructed as an irrational belief in the context of gambling, and as a result, to expose the morality at work behind this discourse.

The morality of worth: to be lucky is to be deserving

The depiction of Chinese people as culturally more superstitious feeds into the general argument that the belief in luck leads to gambling addiction, and subsequently, it also nicely fits with the idea that Chinese people are prone to gamble. This rhetoric of luck and addiction was frequently mentioned to me, the researcher.

‘If you win money the first time you go gambling, then you will probably become addicted. If the first time you go, you don’t win any money, then it’s unlikely you will become addicted, and that you will go gambling again. When the first time you gamble, you lose, you won’t be coming back to gamble.’

Peng, a Chinese Malaysian in his early 30s and undocumented restaurant worker in Chinatown (see Chapter 3), is telling a typical much-shared narrative among gamblers and healthcare professionals caring for gamblers - that of beginner’s luck. Striking lucky in one’s early gambling attempts is one of the recurrent explanations given for the obsessive attraction to gambling that a player develops. Winning too much money and too quickly ironically turns out to bring about the less good fate of becoming an ‘addicted’ gambler.

Keera, one of the counsellors at the Chinese Mental Health Association (CMHA), explains that the problem with these early wins is that they make gamblers falsely believe they have a special ability to win money and to be lucky again in the future. It creates the feeling that this lucky streak is a precedent that they can repeat.

‘Usually at the beginning they have a big win, the first, the second, or the third time, they only play £2-£3 and they win £10 or £100. They have a big win experience. That’s why they continue, they think ‘I can continue to have a good luck and win £100 from just £10’.’

The 福音戒賭中 *fuyin jiedu zhongxin*, Christian Centre for Gambling Rehabilitation (CCGR),²⁴⁶ a Christian centre dedicated to helping Chinese gamblers to quit gambling, is particularly keen to reform them from this type of false belief. During one of their counselling group sessions, that I was kindly authorised to observe,²⁴⁷ one of the two group leaders explained how they teach their clients that ‘events are independent in

²⁴⁶ From now on referred to as CCGR.

²⁴⁷ The counselling sessions were in Cantonese but an organizing member kept me up to date with what was going on by frequently feeding me with information of what they were talking about while explaining the CCGR’s role and aims in the process.

gambling’ and that ‘it is not because a number has come out for a while that it is going to come out soon’. The idea is to re-educate gamblers that gambling is random, not determined, and that they cannot influence outcomes by their actions in the context of gambling. According to their teaching, only ‘good luck’ happens in gambling; there is no moral luck. This argument is drawn from a book elaborated by cognitive psychologists, *Overcoming your Pathological Gambling: Therapist Guide* (Ladouceur & Lachance 2007). They have just finished the 12-week treatment prescribed in the book, which they have readapted to the Centre’s Christian ethos. The book teaches that when you are alone and bored and have an urge to gamble you need to remain calm. The CCGR tells their clients this is not enough and the only way to achieve this is to pray.

Compared to mainstream gambling care providers,²⁴⁸ the CCGR considers a ‘problem gambler’ totally ‘cured’ when they have completely stopped any form of gambling. Other providers of gambling counselling aim to help gamblers to control their gambling but not necessarily to erase all gambling activities from their life. In order to make their point that gambling is morally wrong and should not be practiced at all, the CCGR borrows the cognitive psychology’s argument that gamblers are malfunctioning at the cognitive level. This is a seductive point since it suggests that there is something ‘wrong’ with gamblers and therefore that ‘problem gamblers’ need to be ‘fixed’ in order to behave normally again. A similar discourse of reforming individuals has been prevalent within recent government policy in the UK (although, significantly, not guided by the Christian ethos of total abstinence). A letter to then Culture Secretary, Gerry Sutcliffe, from the Gambling Commission about research on high-stake, high prize gaming machines acknowledged that while there are structural factors (availability of machines, nature of play, etc) to consider, the number one priority for research is the education of players. The central question of the research was thus: ‘What scope is there to improve education, information and player control to make decisions about their gambling?’ (Gambling Commission 30 June 2009: 8). The language of education transfers responsibility for problem gambling from the environment created and maintained by regulation, to the erroneous beliefs (or irresponsible decisions) made by gamblers themselves.

248 Gamcare, Gordon Moody Association, Gamblers Anonymous, Gam-Anon, Chinese Mental Health Association, and Chinese National Healthy Living Centre.

This inability on the part of gamblers to understand that gambling is random, that is to say that independent events are not meaningfully linked, is frequently referred to in psychology as ‘cognitive distortions’, but is also mentioned under a variety of other appellations such as ‘erroneous perceptions’ or ‘irrational thinking’. According to a prolific number of psychological experiments, cognitive distortions are made manifest in a variety of observed attitudes among gamblers: overestimation of personal skills, illusion of control, gambler’s fallacy, near misses, selective memory, cognitive entrapment or overestimation of perceived success’s likelihood, illusory causal correlations, belief in luck and other superstitious beliefs (Benhsain, Tallefer & Ladouceur 2004, Delfabbro 2004, Delfabbro & Winefield 2000, Griffiths 1994, Joukhador, Maccallum, Blaszczynski 2003, Källmén, Andersson & Andren 2008, Ladouceur et al. 1988, Ladouceur & Walker 1996, 1992, Miller & Currie 2008, Monaghan, Blaszczynski & Nower 2009, Sévigny & Ladouceur 2003, Toneatto 1999, Toneatto, Blitz-Miller, Calderwood, Dragonetti, & Tsanos, 1997, Walker 1992, Xian et al. 2008, see Raylu & Oei 2002: 1031-1035 for a literature review on this point). The list is not exhaustive but it illustrates the general idea that from a cognitive perspective problem gamblers are considered to have misperceptions about what goes on during gambling. These misperceptions are, in turn, offered as one explanation of why gamblers persist in gambling despite obvious signs that they will lose. Although the foundation of this argument has started to be challenged via the design of new psychological experiments emphasising the role of active involvement (Martinez, Bonnefon & Hoskens 2009), anti-gambling treatments such as the one advocated in *Overcoming your Pathological Gambling: Therapist Guide* are still strongly based on cognitive theory. They recommend that healthcare providers educate ‘pathological gamblers’ about the falsity of their beliefs and teach them that luck is ‘something that you cannot *predict* or *control*’ (Ladouceur & Lachance 2007: 62, original emphasis).²⁴⁹

The observation by cognitive psychology that some gamblers, named ‘problem’ or ‘pathological’ gamblers, hold irrational beliefs about gambling seems to portray them as the remnants of an era of determinism, trapped in an obsolete time where they are

249 Besides the learning theories model of treatment there are other forms of treatment available to tackle problem gambling which stem from different theoretical approaches to the understanding of problem gambling: psychodynamic model, medical model, behavioural model, psychologically based models (addiction and learning theories) and cognitive-behavioural models (Raylu & Oei 2002).

unfamiliar with the concepts of randomness and probability and where they believe that events are controlled by external forces (see André 2009, Benhsain, Taillefer, Ladouceur 2004). The problem with this approach is that it carries the idea that, since their actions are not rewarded by winning, gamblers are inept at exerting agency through gambling. This argument was strongly established by Walker's experiments (1992, 1996) and other collaborative works (Ladouceur & Walker 1992, 1996). Walker laid the theoretical ground that irrational thinking is the only explanation for the fact that gamblers persist in gambling despite obvious signs that they will lose. By following this logic, it is only when the gambler wins regularly, as in the case of professional gamblers, that they can be said to be rational.²⁵⁰

Using the framework provided by Lears (2003) in his book *Something for Nothing: Luck in America*, I argue that this labelling of gambling as irrational in the context of my research urgently needs to be read in connection with a more general economic perspective.²⁵¹ What is in fact pointed to as problematic about the relationship of gambling and luck is that it goes against the dominant ideology of the self-made man that 'you make your own luck', where luck comes out of sweat and tears, not 'out of nothing' (Lears 2003). This becomes evident in the way Max differentiates between 'good luck' and 'moral luck'. As was narrated in Chapter 4, he rejects his friend's comment that if he gets rich with his marketing software it will just be luck. For him, being lucky is more than just a random outcome: it is the sign that he is worthy of success. It is in that sense that Max believes that he can create his own luck.

'I believe if you try to do something if you try it hard, if you're smart about it, then luck is going to happen to you, you will become happy just by the fact that you're trying hard, and other people will just think you're lucky because they won't see the try hard part.'

This neo-liberal ideology, which is rooted in the American creed, has taken on a life of its own in the contexts of both Mainland China and overseas Chinese communities as a

250 See Hayano's ethnography of poker players (1982) and Rosecrance's study of professional horseracing gamblers (1988). Both describe that it is possible to earn a living by gambling in poker and horserace betting where there are opportunities to make profit (not like in the casino where the gambler plays against the house). They also describe that this breadwinning activity can be unstable and requires discipline and commitment.

251 In a similar vein, Chu (2004) argues that burning paper money (an imitation of real currencies specially made for religious purposes) in rituals for the gods or for the dead is wrongly considered superstitious, irrational, and a sign of backwardness. Instead she argues that these ritual practices entertain an ambiguous rapport with capital accumulation.

way to affirm the strength and uniqueness of Chineseness (see Chapter 1). The self-enterprising subject now also belongs ‘to the core of what it means to be (and to behave) Chinese today’ (Zhang & Ong 2008: 3). Although its adoption takes a different shape in China compared to America or to other contexts, the idea that to be lucky is to be deserving (Lears 2003) equally shapes Chinese individuals. In this context, those who acquire wealth through the wrong means are morally condemnable for not being deserving enough.²⁵² They are denigrated for not attracting the right kind of luck, that is to say ‘moral luck’.

The numerous definitions of the term ‘to win’ in the Oxford Dictionary of English are a good illustration of this uncomfortable association of the absence of moral worth with the distribution of lucky outcomes in gambling:

- To achieve first place in a competition
- To gain or receive (a prize, first place, etc) in a competition
- To succeed in or gain (something) with an effort
- To achieve recognition in some field of endeavour
- To gain victory or triumph in (a battle, argument, etc.)
- To earn or procure (a living, etc) by work
- To take possession of, esp. violently; capture
- To reach with difficulty (a desired condition or position) or become free, loose, etc., with effort
- To turn someone into (a supporter, enemy, etc.)
- To gain (the sympathy, loyalty, etc.) of someone
- To obtain (a woman, etc.) in marriage

All converge towards the idea that the object of winning is not easy to reach. To win implies the granting of a reward for active effort. The etymology of the word ‘to win’²⁵³ itself carries this double meaning of effort and reward since it is a fusion of the old English words *winnan* ‘struggle for, work at’ and *gewinnan* ‘to gain or succeed by struggling’. So whatever you plan to achieve (victory, success, prize, livelihood, etc) is not just something that you desire and which is luckily given to you; ‘to win’ is something *you deserve to obtain out of your hard work*.²⁵⁴ Clearly in these definitions, winning or winnings are not godsend, they are the fruit of one’s labour. Winning does not happen without effort, or rather, *should not* happen without effort. The English

252 Howland interestingly describes in his ethnography of lottery players in New Zealand that winners are also evaluated to be deserving or not ‘by what they did with their winnings’ (2001: 17).

253 According to the Chambers Dictionary of Etymology, 1988.

254 As Weber (2003 [1905]) has shown, the spirit of capitalism and its pursuit for gain have originally been influenced by the Protestant ethic which advocates the attainment of wealth as a sign of being deserving.

meaning of winning implicitly conveys a moral connotation, that you cannot get ‘something out of nothing’ (Lears 2003). In this moral narrative, only wealth accumulated through the right means is a sign of being deserving. As a result, it imposes an authoritative idea: that nothing happens by accident.

However as we will now see, when winning happens in the present, right now, without having to wait or make any effort - that is to say when it happens out of ‘good luck’ - the morality of wealth acquisition is shuffled dramatically. This is apparent in the description of gambling as a way of earning money that is equal to, or better than, work. In that sense, winning out of luck calls into question the moral celebration of work as the only appropriate way to acquire wealth. It is this morality that Chinese players are trying to challenge by coming to gamble in London’s casinos.

Better to be lucky than hard working: the inequalities of luck

The argument that Chinese people are culturally more inclined to believe in luck is the source of another problem: how is it possible to be both a hard worker and a card-carrying believer in luck? It is indeed noticeable that the Chinese are invariably described as a hard-working ethnic group (Harrel 1985, Ong 1997, Stites 1985, Toyota 2003) to which Chinese people in the UK are no exception. The hard-working quality of Chinese in Britain is stressed as one of their best characteristics and demonstrates Chinese migrants’ ability to contribute to the national economy and not be a drain on the British welfare system (see Chapter 4). Chinese themselves are the first ones to reproduce the stereotype and to proclaim their ability to work hard. During fieldwork, my interlocutors often reminded me of the value of hard work. A second-generation Chinese, Leo, looks back on his harsh and distasteful time working in his parents’ take away as a necessary experience to make him hard-working and responsible. An activist defending the right of Chinese restaurants workers, Gustav, praises the quality of being hardworking as the strength of their workforce. A community leader, Martin, reminds me of the sacrifice of Chinese migrants from the New Territories²⁵⁵ who worked non-

255 Countryside near Hong Kong where a majority of Chinese who immigrated after the 60s to the UK come from (Benton & Gomez 2008)

stop all their lives in the hope of a better life for their families; it is only in their old age that they start enjoying the benefit of leisure time which is facilitated by the centre.

Despite the strong presence of this discourse, many of the gamblers I talked to preferred to win money by gambling than by working hard. A few times during fieldwork I heard some gamblers comparing their winnings and work wages. Each time, the idea was that winning in gambling did not require them to make any effort in order to get the desired money. Winning was presented as the reverse of having to work hard all their lives. Without having to spend hundreds of hours toiling for a monthly salary they could obtain the same amount in a single visit to the casino. Winning had the advantage of bringing them an effortless and immediate reward. It brought them the promise of a better present in the future. Ying, even if he is now less affluent than he was before (see Chapter 4), happily remembers the first time he won a commensurable amount of money at roulette. It felt like a revelation. Finally, he could make money much more easily than by working hard, just by gambling.

‘Once, I went with a friend to have some fun in the casino. This one time I find myself really happy, that is, I placed a few bets, just a few, a few hundreds for fun, then I won a lot of money, I won over a thousands, it’s only now that I’m not winning much. When I won, I felt my job in comparison was a lot of hardship. If I go every day to the casino and each time win a bit of money, it’s really easy. Slowly, slowly, I bet here and there. The first time I went, and the second time, I did rather well. So I went to the casino, every day I brought back a few hundred with me. It was all good. I didn’t need to work anymore.’

In Ying’s discourse, winning out of luck is given preference over earning money as a result of his hard work. It signifies a way out of an unbearable situation: having to work hard. This experience of work as not a choice, exploitative and involving a lot of hardship is fairly common for many of the Chinese migrants who have come to the UK in the hope of a better life (see Pai 2008, Chapters 2 and 4). The condemnation of hard work as a coercive activity in their narratives implicitly presupposes the existence of another force, that of luck, which is praised as a means of individual liberation, by which ‘fantasies of abundance without effort’ can be achieved (Comaroff & Comaroff 2005 [2000]: 179, Howland 2001).

This shift from the value of work in favour of luck that I observed in my fieldwork echoes similar changes in China (Gamble 1997, Hertz 1998, Liu 2009, Steinmüller 2009, Zhang 2010) and in the West as I argue in Chapter 1. For Liu, ‘the return of

notions such as luck or fate or chance' (2009: xii) are signs of China's integration into global capitalism.

'[T]he notion of luck and chance, which did not function effectively within the political space of Maoist logic (...) became central for an understanding of the arrival of the market economy and its forces in 1980s.' (2009: 117)

This means that work is devalued, sometimes even relinquished in favour of risky endeavours, such as trading, doing business or gambling which are seen to offer more opportunities and more scope for the expression of one's agency. However, read through an historical perspective, the portrayal of work as a negative activity is not a new phenomenon. It actually reflects an ongoing debate, long present in the Western philosophical and religious traditions, which asks whether work is a means of freedom or coercion (Harris 2007, Menger 2009). Indeed, not all of my interlocutors did see work as an obstacle to the realisation of their freedom, or as an exigence that was imposed onto them by the external world. Sam (see Chapter 2), for example, would rather get rich as a result of becoming a successful actor than by gambling. Otherwise, it would feel like buying his success and not accomplishing it by himself.

Beyond the debate regarding what is an appropriate way to make money, what is really at stake here is the individual's 'desire to claim ownership over one's being' (Sangren 2008: 1), whether this is accomplished through luck or working hard. What those different discourses about luck and work show is that Chinese people in London are not equal before luck. They do not access luck on equal terms, as the idea of luck tends to make us believe. As Howland (2001) demonstrates in his ethnography of lottery players in New Zealand the lotto serves to maintain this myth of equality before luck.

'Essentially Lotto promotions encourage individuals to be happy with their current lot in life but to keep striving for that elusive lucky break. This discourse correspondingly places the burden of success or failure squarely upon the individual while simultaneously diverting attention away from social, economic and political structures that may determine a person's lot – good or bad.' (2001: 20)

Liu also describes how, during the period of decollectivisation in the village of Zhaojiahe in northwestern China, the land was redistributed by means of a lottery. Although not everybody was happy with the results, 'no one ever complained about the lottery as a rational procedure' (2009: 124) since it represented an egalitarian dream. In contrast, in China (Liu 2009), but also among Chinese people in London, different

experiences of being lucky are signs of socio-economic inequalities. As I explore in Chapter 4, some start their life with far better opportunities than others, which means that getting lucky is not of equal importance for all. As Daisy who has had a rather fortunate life so far rightly comments, there is no point for her to work on her luck. Daisy, a young woman of 28 years old from Hong Kong, has recently moved to the UK to join her new husband who has a good job in the City. Daisy believes that she has had a pretty good life so far. Originally from Guangzhou she was lucky enough to move to Hong Kong as a child which offered far better opportunities in life than if she had stayed in Mainland China. By being in the UK she is furthering her ascension up the social ladder. It is not surprising to hear that Daisy is not anxious about her luck, and that she actually thinks she is rather lucky. However, in contrast to her good situation, she can understand that someone less fortunate than her would, on the contrary, want to be luckier and change the life they live at present for something better.

‘Because my fate is rather good, I have no intention to change it. But those who haven’t been so lucky in their life, they will want to go and change that.’

In contrast with Daisy’s peaceful fortune, Ahmei is still looking for signs of her moral worth. Like many other gamblers I talked to, Ahmei is struggling between her conviction that she is no more stupid or less able than other people and the lack of signs that she is not. Years of Ahmei’s life have passed by and she is now in her late 40s. Because of her age, Ahmei recognises that she definitely cannot control what will come next as she wishes she could. In opposition to Lewis’ and Max’s discourses, which enthusiastically claim an ability to ‘tame’ luck, she bitterly faces the truth that controlling luck by discovering the right numbers to win is a vain quest. Ahmei’s skepticism towards luck reminds me of Mr Zhang’s anxiety about the future, a farmer whom Stafford (2007) met in northeast China. The feelings of both are rooted in their ‘experience of the brutal fatefulness of life’ (2007: 61). As Mr Zhang has reason to be anxious about ‘what will happen next’ (2007), Ahmei has reason to be skeptical that luck will come for her. Both of them have learnt through the numerous difficulties they have faced in life that it is hard to control what is going to happen next. What they have wished for has frequently not come about, so they cannot help but be apprehensive of what will actually come next. In this respect, Ahmei’s attitude differs from the optimistic view of some of my younger interlocutors who are still full of hope that their lucky time will come.

In contrast, Ying, despite his business vagaries (see Chapter 4), has not lost faith in his luck. He has not been very lucky since the time when he was earning good money, but he is still hopeful. He does not know when luck will come back again, but he simply believes that it will. Ying is still hoping, he has not reached ‘disillusion’. ‘Disillusion’ is how Mr Ma, an old man in his 60s explains a lifetime’s relationship with gambling. Starting when he was still in HK in his 30s Mr Ma carried on gambling once in the UK for another 40 years until recently when he reached, as he explains, a state of ‘disillusion’ or ‘self-awareness’. ‘I kept losing till I reached disillusion’, ‘输到化’ *shu dao hua*, until he realised he was not actually lucky as he had believed himself to be all those years.

Among the people I spoke to, it was not only social and economic circumstances which made a difference but also the passage of time. There were noticeable changes in behaviour between younger ones in their 20s and 30s and those who were over 40 and older. Younger ones tended to be more enthusiastic about their future, still hopeful that the dream they came for would be realised. In contrast, those of older ages and/or who had been in the UK for a long time were more skeptical that a better future lay ahead of them and they would envy the wider range of opportunities that their children had at their disposal. Not only might they sometimes have already experienced bitter hardships, but their future prospects were also shrinking as time passed by.

Creating the opportunities to be lucky

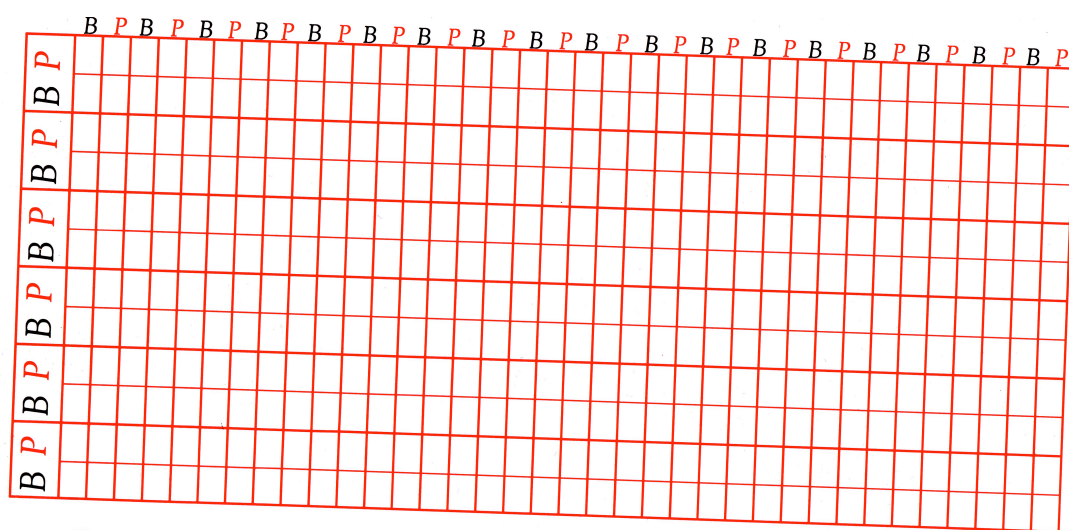
‘[I]nstead of awaiting fate, meet it at the door’
(Goffman 1969: 125)

It’s late on a Wednesday night. I’m sitting next to Mr Gong as he inserts two £20 banknotes into the machine. I watch the whole shoe²⁵⁶ with him. When I ask what he thinks the outcome will be, he explains his strategy to me in detail. He mainly tries to discern a trend from previous results, the first games of the shoe, and to follow the patterns they create in his next moves hoping that they will repeat. The regular patterns (what he calls *guilü* 规律) he analyses consist of a mixture of the shapes made by the

256 The shoe is the boxlike device which holds six or eight packs of standard cards for playing Baccarat in a casino. The device allows the cards to be dispensed singly by the dealer. During my research when gamblers referred to the ‘shoe’, they meant the time span of a baccarat session. Each session approximatively offers 82 to 85 games.

winning statistics, the numbers themselves, the kind of lines that they form or not, the length of the lines that are made, and the recurrence of certain combinations of these different elements (see below pictures of grids with the recorded results of a different shoe each time). According to Mr Gong, if you pick up a trend and it works then you should follow it until it proves not to work anymore.

Typically, Punto Banco players use a sheet of paper provided by the casino that makes it easier to record the trend of the results for each shoe (see pictures below). Each sheet of paper has a grid divided in a series of two columns, one for 'P' Punto (player) and one for 'B' Banco (banker) on the recto side and the basic rules of the card drawing are summarised in two tables on the verso side.²⁵⁷ Punto Banco is a reasonably simple game based on a similar principle to the head and tails choice in the flip of a coin. Punters have to decide who is going to win between two imaginary players, one called 'Punto', player, and the other one called 'Banco', banker, or they can choose to bet for a third option called 'Egalité', where the amount reached by the Player and the Banker is considered to be equal. A dealer draws two or three cards to both Banker and Player. The one who holds cards with a total count nearest to 9 wins.²⁵⁸



Picture 20: Sheet grid provided by the casino for gamblers to fill in the results coming out at Punto Banco during the course of a shoe

²⁵⁷ In the Empire and the Golden Nugget, an electronic board is also provided for each Punto Banco gaming table where the results history of the currently played shoe can be viewed.

²⁵⁸ The valuation of hands takes place following those principles: cards 2–9 are worth face value, 10s and face cards (J, Q, K) are worth zero, and Aces are worth 1 point. The addition of two cards which gives 10 is read as '0', meaning that the ten digit is ignored. After the first two cards have been drawn to both Player and Banker, any further card is drawn strictly in accordance with the 'Tables of play' (see Appendix E).

The result of each draw is carefully noted down by all the players on the sheets provided when they are playing at the table or followed through onto the statistics screen when they're playing at the electronic terminals. Commonly, the results are marked with O each time Banker wins, X each time Player wins, T (for Tie) each time there is Egalit . Banker's and Player's score are kept in separate columns, so the results look like a chart.

Picture 21: Most common way of noting results in lines of O and X. Grid filled in by a player during a Punto Banco game and left behind.

Sometimes, numbers are also recorded in addition or instead of O and X.

Picture 22: More uncommon way of noting results with the actual number which came out and with the distinct colors of red and blue to distinguish the Player and the Banker. Grid filled in by a player during a Punto Banco game and left behind.

A no-column recording system can also be used in parallel.

instead as a sequence where each part is meaningfully linked with the others' (2007: 5).²⁶¹ As I demonstrated earlier, this proclivity of gamblers to deduce connection between independent random events is seen by cognitive psychologists as an erroneous perception about randomness that needs to be corrected in order to treat 'problem gambling' (Ladouceur et al. 1998, 2003). I would argue, however, that it is 'a very human thing to seek answers through observing the patterns of reality in numerical or quasi-mathematical terms.' (Stafford 2007: 61). Mr Gong's analysis of the Punto Banco replicates a common way to deal with the uncertainty of life which is to learn from past events and observed regularities (Feuchtwang 1974, Stafford 2007). In that respect, gambling is another 'pattern-recognition exercise' (Stafford 2007: 59) which, akin to the Chinese cosmological system and divination, is 'fabricat[ing] a sense of control where there is no real control' (Feuchtwang 1974: 244). The difference is that gamblers are not trying to answer what will happen next in their life and are mainly concerned with channelling luck and winning times while knowing the terms they play by in the casino are unfavourable to them, and ultimately that they are more likely to lose in the long run. As Chu observes in a Fujianese village, where she carried out fieldwork about migration at the point of departure, playing mahjong was a 'convenient barometer of their cosmic fortune or karma on any given day' (2004: 218). By gambling, I argue, gamblers are creating a space and time outside the rules and rhythms of life's vicissitudes, where they enjoy a greater sense of control, and as such of agency, and this despite, and because, of the fact that the odds are intentionally in favour of the house.

A considerable advantage of gambling over the course of one's life, as I demonstrated in Chapter 4 is that it provides immediate answers in sharp contrast with the lengthy process of seeing the effects of an individual's actions on his/her everyday life; with gambling there is no wait. In that respect, it is similar to divination for which, as highlighted by Feuchtwang (2001), what matters is not so much the content of the outcome but the reaching of a decision. The individual might not accept the decision that is offered as an answer to his/her question but at least the uncertainty of his/her condition has been given shape and meaning. Although gambling has no spiritual aspiration and does not offer answers about the meaning of one's life, it shares with divination this need to fix the future into a specific time and place. When changing the

261 My own translation from the following French text: 'les joueurs « narrativisent » le jeu, en considérant les tirages successifs (...) mais comme une séquence dont les enchaînements font sens.'

word ‘divination’ for the word ‘gambling’ in the following quote, the parallel appears more obvious.

‘Incalculability or luck is by [gambling] turned into a defined temporality, given a sense of time, and a decision or outcome is given an authority’ (Feuchtwang 2001: 156)

With gambling there is no wait to know if you are able to win or not, and you can still play again at the next game if you are not happy with the current outcome.

Gambling is also, more explicitly so than with Chinese cosmology (Stafford 2007: 61), a way to avoid human interference and other unpredictable obstacles while performing actions. Casinos are particularly favourable places for this isolation since they are secluded environments where uncertainty is strictly minimised in comparison to life situations. After all, as Cassidy (2009: 13) reminds us ‘[c]asinos do not produce radical uncertainty, they deal solely in risk’. Cassidy refers here to the instructive distinction made by Knight (2006 [1921]) between risk and uncertainty.²⁶² Risk is a ‘*measurable* uncertainty’, something that we know from past experience can potentially happen and which as a result can be apprehended by probability and statistics, while uncertainty is ‘*unmeasurable*’; it is basically what we do not know might happen (Dwyer & Minnegal 2006, Knight 2006 [1921]). In that respect, there is no big surprise as to the nature of the outcome at each bet you make, either you win or you lose but nothing uncertain outside this two choices outcome is likely to happen.

Gambling in the casino pushes the control of luck a step further in order to optimise the harnessing of luck and time. As Yuan Ting painfully learnt, luck in the casino is not to be confused with luck outside the casino. His quest for luck when playing roulette jeopardised, in the long run, his aspiration of going back home with lots of money.

‘The casino, there is no luck there, they control it, gaming tables, when you bet something, you can’t win, you can’t win at all! They first let you win some, and once you got hooked, it’s a bottomless pit, you’re filled with constant dissatisfaction. Now I have truly understood, everything has come clear to me.’

Yuan Ting bitterly experienced that the casino is a place of managed consumption where luck is sold as a commodity under the etiquette of entertainment (Cosgrave 2006,

²⁶² As suggested by Dwyer & Minnegal (2006: 2-3), the distinction is not totally unproblematic in some aspects (see Dwyer and Minnegal 2006 for more detail). However, the distinction, I argue, is useful to articulate the particularities that the space of the casino offers in terms of risk.

Howland 2001, Reith 2002, 2007). Contrary to other forms of gambling where it is possible to make a living out of gambling,²⁶³ in the casino playing against the house leads to only one outcome, losing money. The casino is a highly controlled space (Schwartz 2003) where ‘rules, regulations and surveillance (...) are designed to minimise risk to the casino, primarily the financial risks brought about by cheating, fraud, theft, etc.’ (Cosgrave 2006: 17). As I sometimes reminded those who thought I could find magical tricks to win at gambling in the casino: if there were, there would not be any casino. Beyond current discourses about social responsibility and minimising problem gambling, the main aim of the casino remains, as it always will, to make profit. As it has been rightly argued (Cosgrave 2006, Cosgrave & Klassen 2001, Reith 2007, 2002) gambling is promoted as a form of entertainment with no real representation of risk. In the UK, since 2001, it has been recategorised as a leisure activity (see Chapter 3). Within those discourses gambling in the casino is assimilated with financial speculation but unlike the situations of the market, the casino needs to make sure that profit is consistent and predictable (Cassidy 2009). In the casino there cannot be any surprises. That is why, ‘returns are a direct reflection of the game and the stake, and probabilities are fixed and calculable’ (2009: 13). In the discourse of Yuan Ting and of other gamblers, there is an interesting tension between winning money in the casino as an exceptional and unlikely occurrence and the experience of winning in the casino as regular and repetitive occurrence. One is about the end, the other about the process. Paradoxically, the fact that the odds are set against gamblers in the casino and make them lose in the long run is also what creates a space they can control since uncertainty is limited.

Thanks to successful counselling with the Chinese Mental Health Association (CMHA), Yuan Ting has managed to escape the spiral of his gambling habit which had dragged him into heavy debt. He still believes in luck though but not the luck of making it big and quick anymore. He now believes being lucky is just being happy with what he has. Yuan Ting is still young and his hope of another better future still needs to overcome the social pressure of making enough money before he goes back home and a few more working years in the UK. Yuan Ting’s story demonstrates that gambling in the casino is a deeply paradoxical activity. On one hand, casinos are places of intense control and

263 Ibid. footnote 250.

regulation, which minimise risk in order to make a profit. On the other hand, this minimisation of risk creates a ‘utopia of rules’²⁶⁴ for gamblers, providing a space outside the irreversible course of the individual’s life where luck can be experienced as risk, and harnessed, shielded from the vagaries of life’s uncertainties.

Conclusion

As long as time spent working hard becomes money, it is worth it, despite how terribly harsh work can be. But hard work does not necessarily mean success, it is also filled with uncertainty. Chinese people in London who are struggling on the job market are often faced with the reality that hard work does not bring security anymore. Some, like Ying and Yuang Ting, have already gambled away their life to come to the UK, having to repay years of debt before they can hope for any returns, without taking into account the everyday risk of being sent back home with the prospect of not having saved enough money. So what difference does gambling in a casino or bookies make? The person who does not take risks will never know what they are really capable of. For those migrants, gambling seems only a step away from the choice to come to the UK. However, being fortunate in life, facing less hardship and/or having a brighter future ahead of you, does not mean you are spared with uncertainty. Lewis, after all, might speak authoritatively about his trading skills and might have a stable income, but he is anxious about losing money for more than two weeks in his portfolio. Sam’s acting career, although far more creative and far less profitable, might never take him to the success he hopes. Both of them face on a regular basis uncertain chances of success that they overestimate in order to carry on (Godechot 2007, Menger 2009).²⁶⁵ For Lewis and Sam, gambling is not so different from their professional activity. It is true that winning big in gambling is exceptional but at least with gambling the reaching of a decision (winning or losing) is immediate. You do not have to wait to know if the action you have taken is the right one or not. In comparison to the unpredictable aspect of life, gambling only deals with risk. There is no surprise and no wait; the payout in that respect is immediate, and this

²⁶⁴ I owe this elegant expression to David Graeber.

²⁶⁵ The radio programme *La Suite dans les Idées* broadcast on France Culture presented a discussion about the new book of Menger (2009), *Le travail Créateur*. It links Menger’s work about artists with Godechot’s (2007) work about traders to show that both traders and artists construct themselves as individuals in the face of uncertainty. (Bourmeau 5 May 2009)

despite the fact that the monetary payout becomes more exceptional and unlikely as you are playing more. You can know straight away if you are deserving or not and try your luck again immediately afterwards.

In his ethnography of gambling within the city of Chania in Crete Malaby uses gambling to reconsider the way its inhabitants deal with indeterminacy on a daily basis. He argues that 'everyday activity of gambling (...) provid[es] a unique lens through which to explore how social actors confront uncertainty in several keys areas of their lives' (2003: 7). I have shown in this chapter that the desire to experience luck in the casino is linked to the way uncertainty is experienced in one's life and also to the way individuals deal with certainties such as the lack of future prospects or an unsatisfactory fate. For those who have not been that lucky so far, it is not only difficult to accept that their past cannot be changed (Zhang 2010: 210) but also that they will not be able to change the present for a better future. For them, the casino might be the only place where they can experience the feeling of being lucky. In their situation, the chances of winning in a casino are not much different from their chances of winning outside. But the small chances of success are not important here, what matters is to take risks. As Mr Yu explains, even if winning once in a hundred games does not make you fortunate, it is still a proof that you have the ability to be lucky and that is what counts:

'Sometimes you lose, sometimes you win, it is never 100%. That is to say if you win 10%, it is still luck, isn't? When you gamble, you always win a little. If you gamble 100 times, do you lose 100 times? Of course, you lose, losses are a big percentage. But you still have one, five%, 2%. (...) For example, today you gamble 10 times, you only win once, it is still winning (...). You can't say you didn't win at all, you've won and you've lost. You've used a £100 to gamble, you've lost £99, you still have got a pound left, this one pound might be your winning pound. You've lost 99% but you can't say you aren't lucky. You're lucky, you are, for this 1%.'

In this context, the experience of luck takes on its full meaning. Its greatest inconvenience - fleetingness - is also its greatest advantage since luck is always on the move. It does not stay but it will come back. So you might not experience much luck but you are almost guaranteed to experience some, even if it is just for that 1%, as long as you cultivate it. The distinction between fate, luck and fortune needs to be pushed further here. Whatever fate you have, you can still be lucky, the real matter is whether an individual has enough 'auspiciousness' to sustain it (Zhang 2010). In that case luck

becomes fortune (Empson forthcoming). Gambling in the casino is the constant action of harnessing luck without the possibility of turning it into fortune. Luck in the casino is a different kind of luck to the one experienced in the course of life. It cannot make you climb up the social ladder and it has no long-term aspirations. It is experienced for what it is, within the momentum of gambling actions, as I described in Chapter 3, and is intentionally sought with the implied prospect that it will never end. A metaphor employed by Chloe, a Chinese counselor, best illustrates this idea of luck as gamblers experience it and why they seek to live it again:

‘Being lucky is something that you can never forget, it’s like being in love.’

Chapter 7

Being greedy in the casino: a vain desire for money?

During my interactions with Chinese gamblers, I would often probe them about their reasons for gambling. I never really expected the answers to provide me with any explicit clues. As I make clear in Chapter 1, it became quickly evident that many Chinese people, gamblers and non-gamblers, were, with reason, often wary of the negative connotations that gambling had in the UK society. Certainly because of the defensive attitudes that I was constantly exposed to, I subconsciously took it for granted that most of my interlocutors would portray themselves in a good light, or would just deny being a gambler. This was confirmed during fieldwork. Sometimes I found out that people gambled, perhaps infrequently, despite the fact that they had denied it. Those I knew gambled often explained that they were not the ‘real’ gamblers, who were actually those who gambled more than they did, and/or had been gambling for longer. For my research participants, the category ‘gambler’ was eternally problematic, narrowly and inflexibly describing who they were and what they were doing. Because of their resistance to these limited possibilities of definition, I did not anticipate that some of my interlocutors would prefer the short statement of ‘I’m greedy’ to explain their attraction for gambling. I was taken aback, and I remained puzzled for a long time by the blunt and shameless evocation of their greed. How could they choose such a negatively perceived feeling to justify their gambling practices when they worked so hard to be dissociated from the perverse qualities attributed to gambling?

Greed is widely used to stigmatise excessive accumulation and the incapacity to contain this urge for more (Roberston 2001). While reminding me that ‘gambling is bad’, that gamblers are not trustworthy people and that I should not be hanging out in the casino on my own or with other gamblers as much as I did, my interlocutors also complained about greed. Peng, for example, thought that not just gamblers but all Chinese people were ‘greedy’ and ‘selfish’, while Mr Pan claimed that ‘10 out of 12 gamblers were greedy, especially those from Mainland China’. Yet, this condemnation always seemed to be directed at others and gambling in general, not at themselves. What do those Chinese gamblers actually mean by ‘I’m greedy’? And how does it differ from the

moral framework that is usually referred to as greed? In this chapter, I demonstrate that the qualification of greed as an inner quality of the individual is a more empowering way to describe the self. More importantly, I argue that this appropriation of greed demonstrates that money is an object variously conceived, which, within the spatial and temporal context of the casino plays a central role in the construction of personhood.

Following the model set by Zhang's study of envy in rural North China as 'the range of *emotional* responses to China's newly accumulated wealth' (2010: 11, original emphasis), I propose to analyse how the feeling of greed among certain Chinese casino players is not an isolated individual feeling but is a type of 'emotional response' to the situation of migration and individuals' unfilled desires of 'getting rich quickly' which has found a place of expression within the space of certain London's casinos. Thanks to the intense and incessant circulation of money that the casino provides, Chinese casino players can fully satisfy their feeling of greed, since, as I will demonstrate, temporary enjoyment is inherent to the nature of greed. First I explore how for some Chinese gamblers, being greedy is not a negative and opprobrious feeling but is on the contrary the expression of their freedom of action in relation to money, and therefore of their individuality. This led me to demonstrate that the agency that gamblers exercise in gambling is not against money or for money, but with money. This means that money's meaning comes alive in its constant circulation, in its temporary times of acquisition and spending. This movement of money also signifies how greed is not a purely selfish act but takes its full meaning in relation to others and in the way an individual is connected or not with them through the exchange of money. In that respect, my ethnography of Chinese casino players is both similar and different from earlier ethnographies of gambling in a Greek village (Papataxiarchis 1999), among Gypsies in Hungary (Stewart 1994), Hazda hunter-gatherers (Woodburn 1982), in a Canadian Eskimo village (Riches 1975), in Tiwi society (Goodale 1987), among Australian Aborigenes (Altman 1985) or in Melanesian societies (Hayano 1983, Mitchell 1989, Sexton 1987, Zimmer 1986). Like them it emphasizes that gambling is inherently social and it dismisses the idea of pure self-interest. It does not go as far, nevertheless, as arguing for egalitarianism, a leveling system or resistance to the oppression of money and capitalism. It demonstrates rather that the social dynamic in gambling is not clear-cut, but exists in relation to the eternal tensions between individual and society, self-interest and altruism.

Greed: an unjustified or legitimate desire to grow?

‘[I]t is in our nature both to be greedy and to have to moderate greed’
(Robertson 2001: 49)

Greed is the kind of term whose meaning feels so evident that it does not seem to require too much explanation: a person is being greedy when she is unable or unwilling to control her desires for more. However, mentioning greed is not a neutral statement. It is implying that restraint is morally normative and as such it is usually used to disapprove of others’ inability to limit their desires, to be contented with what they have got. In the *Dao de jing*²⁶⁶ the desire to want more, greed, is condemned as a way to promote the virtue of living frugally.

‘There is no calamity greater than lavish desires.

There is no greater guilt than discontentment.

And there is no greater disaster than greed.

He who is contented with contentment is always contented.’²⁶⁷

Let’s not forget also that for Catholicism, greed is the sin of excess, one of the seven capital sins. St Thomas Aquinas describes greed ‘as a sin against god, just as all mortal sins, in so much as man contemns things eternal for the sake of temporal things’ (Part 2, 2nd part, Q. CXVIII, article 1).²⁶⁸ Here also, greed is used as an example not to follow. From the perspective of the one judging, greed is an unjustified desire to want more than is needed, where more is never enough, and is acquired directly at the expense of others. Accusing someone of being greedy is basically reproaching him/her for acting selfishly, without taking into account the wellbeing of people around. In classical Athens, greed was morally condemned for being a threat to the harmony of society since ‘greedy desires reveal an impoverished conception of what it means to live as a human being’ (Balot 2001: 1). In this ancient context, greed became the ‘idea that greedy agents violated canons of fair distribution among equal individuals or groups’ (2001: 1). As a result, ‘members of a moral community use[d] the concept to criticize others’ with the aim of educating individuals about collective values (2001: 1).

266 The *Dao de jing*, also known as Tao Te Ching, is a Chinese classic text whose authorship is attributed to Lao zi and which is central to Taoism. It is commonly believed to have been written around the 6th Century.

267 *Dao de jing*, Translation from Chan (1963). Original Chinese text: ‘罪莫大于可欲，祸莫大于不知足；咎莫大于欲得。故知足之足，常足矣。’

268 Article 1 of Question 118 of the 2nd part of the Summa Theologica asks ‘whether covetousness is a sin?’ (Aquinas 1922).

With its unstoppable excess greed is comparable to the way gambling is understood by psychologists through the model of the individual pathology (Suisa 2006). Like addiction, greed has the effect of turning a want into a need, of making its feeling ‘essential to the body’ (Robertson 2001: 24). The individual is described as being alienated from himself and in need of recovering his original self. Based on clinical observations among traders and entrepreneurs, Nikelly (1992, 2006) characterises greed to be uncontrollable, a pathology and addiction for which the recommended treatment is to re-educate individuals toward a more appropriate social learning. This echoes the way cognitive psychologists, as I suggested in Chapter 6, advocate the reform of gamblers’ ‘false beliefs’. They argue that gamblers are addicted to winning money and that they wrongly believe in their ability to win.²⁶⁹ In this chapter, I question the premise that gamblers’ desire for money is dysfunctional and I propose to observe how the feeling of greed, on the contrary, is used by Chinese gamblers to construct their personhood.

Tom, was one of those individuals who made it bluntly clear that the only good thing about gambling was to win money and nothing else. Tom, a Chinese Malaysian who immigrated to the UK in 1972, was an interesting case since he was both a dealer and a gambler.²⁷⁰ Although he had not been able to gamble for the last 28 years, dealers are now able to gamble under the new legislation. Tom is full of complaints about gambling and when he retires he wants to set up an anti-gambling group. He also hates gamblers²⁷¹ and thinks they have nothing else to talk about but money. Despite all this revulsion for gambling and gamblers, Tom still carries on going to the casino during his non-working time, on top of the hours he spends there working. When I probe him further about whether there is anything that he likes about gambling since, after all, he keeps going to the casino to gamble, he replies that only winning matters to him.

Claire: So what do you find attractive in gambling?

Tom: I don’t find it attractive at all, in fact I hate it. It’s just sometimes my wife wants to go down there, I go with her, and then oh... We’re getting old now, we don’t drink, we

269 Overestimation of one’s ability to win is said to be induced by an illusion of control over the game (Langler 1975, Reid 1986), by the expectation that a series of losses will be corrected by a series of wins, technically called ‘gambler’s fallacy’ (Toneatto 1999), by nearly wins (Griffiths 1991, Reid 1986) and by long period of initial winnings (Lesieur & Custer 1984).

270 Tom started to gamble a year after he arrived to the UK.

271 Like all of the four dealers I interviewed.

don't enjoy going to clubs, we go to restaurant and have some good food after that we go to casino spend some times.

Claire: 'Is there anything you enjoy about gambling or...?'

Tom: 'No, no I don't enjoy it. I only enjoy it if I win.'

Claire: 'Well, it is still something...'

Tom: [laugh] 'Well it makes me happy.'

Later on in the interview, he insists again that he does not like gambling, the only reason why he gambles is greed.

'I don't enjoy [gambling] now, even though I'm still doing it. The only thing in my mind now is pure greed, greedy. Hopefully at the next spin I will win some money.'

Although not all of the Chinese gamblers I met define themselves as greedy, the assertion 'I gamble because I'm greedy' appeared more than once during fieldwork. I was not so much surprised that some Chinese gamblers would define themselves in negative terms but that compared to those who recognized themselves to be addicted, they did not acknowledge their greediness or show the intention to control it. In fact, the way those Chinese gamblers spoke of greed departed from the moral discourse that greed generally carries. This contrast between gamblers' discourses of greed and addiction is unusual and requires a more in-depth analysis. Greed, as I explained above, is more commonly used as a way to condemn what is perceived to be an unhealthy behaviour in society. It is a way to prescribe how one should behave appropriately. In that sense, the concept of greed shares the same moral project of addiction. That is why the use of greed as an inner and positive quality of the self appears at first incongruous. In order to explore this further, I use discussions among research participants who also make interesting distinctions about greed. The discourse of two older men, Mr Pan and Mr Ma, who I happened to interview by pure chance²⁷² at the same time,²⁷³ offer a good opportunity to observe these distinctions in greater detail.

272 This serendipitous example nicely illustrates the point I was making in Chapter 1 that my fieldwork is partly guided by my choices as a researcher and partly by the unexpected and uncertain nature of my encounters with various others.

273 These two men provided my first two interviews, the only ones I carried out at the same time and using Cantonese interpreters. They were unexpectedly presented to me as interviewees as I was making my first visit to the Camden Chinese community centre (one of the few centres that did not show too much resistance in meeting me). I thought I was going to be discussing my research but I ended up interviewing those two men helped by two teenagers with the translation. As it quickly became clear that my young interpreters did not bother giving me the important detail of what the two men were exactly saying, I re-arranged to interview the two men another day. This time I did the interviews separately and I recorded them. I then subsequently presented the recordings to

Interestingly, Mr Pan and Mr Ma share similar circumstances since they both have stopped gambling after going through severe financial difficulties.²⁷⁴ They both started gambling in China²⁷⁵ and have gambled on a regular basis since arrival in the UK. They both agree that gambling was easy to start but not easy to stop. However, they explain their trajectories and their decisions to stop gambling in different terms. Mr Pan has recently been attending sessions at the Chinese Anti-Gambling Rehabilitation Centre (CCGR)²⁷⁶ and has been helped financially by them. As a result, his discourse is strongly tinted by the idea of addiction. He talks about ‘how [he] became addicted’ and ‘how gambling is addictive’. He even goes as far as calling himself a 赌鬼 *dugui*²⁷⁷ which expresses the idea that gambling has taken over his soul and that his gambling habit has in the end become too excessive and problematic. This description of what he has become stands in striking contrast to the way he happily remembers his first memories of gambling in China with his family and all the different games they would play then. For him, this was a time ‘full of fun and life’. Now, there is nothing of the sort. Although Mr Ma also had to stop gambling because of debts, this did not lead him to adopt the discourse of addiction. The way he explains how he got into trouble is full of self-awareness and without a hint of self-pity. Eight years ago he got into £18000 of debt (which has now been repaid) by gambling with the seven credit cards he obtained from different banks. He partly blames them for lending him the money that nobody else would have, but he does not present himself as a helpless victim. On the contrary, he proudly defends his behaviour by justifying that he is and has always been a greedy person.

‘Those games that would only allow me to win small I would not play them. I’m greedy. I used to believe so and I still believe so.’

The bold statement of ‘I gamble(d) because I’m greedy’ first sounds shocking and arrogant; it seems to confirm that gamblers are deeply selfish and individualistic. Greed, however, is not usually something people easily confess to. As Robertson notes, ‘we do

my Cantonese-speaking friend Zhihong who helped me to transcribe the interviews and to clear up any misunderstandings in the interpretation.

274 This is probably why they had been chosen as relevant interviewees. In contrast, none of the mahjong players who were gambling in the big common room while I interviewed them had been considered serious enough gamblers for me to interview.

275 Mr Pan started as a teenager with his family, while Mr Ma started later in his 30s when his mother was sick and he needed more money to take care of her.

276 See Chapter 6 for more detail about CCGR.

277 The expression of 赌鬼 *dugui* is copied from the expression 酒鬼 *jiugui*, drunkard and 色鬼 *segui*, sex maniac.

not like to be regarded as greedy' (2001: 21). It is more something that is recognised in others, that others are accused of being. When we are aware of being greedy it is actually more something we are ashamed of and keep quiet about. It is definitely not something we would claim to be.²⁷⁸ Surprisingly, Mr Ma does not in the least feel ashamed of being greedy. In his view, greed has a positive connotation which demonstrates his capacity of being as an individual. 'Being greedy' for Mr Ma contrasts with the way Mr Pan describes himself as a 赌鬼 *dugui* which implies that a malicious and external force has taken control of his own body and impedes his agency. By recognizing himself to be addicted to gambling, Mr Pan admits that not being able to control himself is a problem that needs to be addressed, that to become a fully functioning social being he needs to regain control of himself. As described more fully by Rose (1996), Mr Pan's understanding of personhood reflects how psychological sciences have become technologies for governing individuals.

This implies that as long as the desire can be controlled, wanting more money can yield positive consequences for all. As a matter of fact, under certain circumstances, desiring money is presented as socially productive and valued as a necessary impetus for growth. Is it not indeed the spirit that animates capitalism, and in doing so produces a progressive and forward-looking society as promoted by certain economists and politicians (Schumaker 2004)? After all, capital accumulation, 'making money with money' is the main principle of capitalist ideology (Hart 2001). This is how capitalism was founded in the first place: on the idea that moneymaking is good and necessary for the development and progress of society (Hirschman 1977). The discourse of Max, a would be entrepreneur (see Chapter 4), is reminiscent of 18th century philosophy on the question, and echoes the arguments discussed before by Montesquieu, Hume or Adam Smith (Hirschman 1977). According to him, capitalism is beneficial to society since monetary gains motivate people to achieve things they would not otherwise have achieved; it creates technological and social progress.

'I really believe in capitalism, I think, to a certain degree it's a great mechanism to motivate people. It's quite striking how in the former Soviet Union where everyone got paid the same amount of wages, the economy didn't develop. And in the West where

278 Unless, as Robertson remarks rightly, it is employed as a way to emphasise a good cause, such as in the affirmation 'I'm being greedy for the poor' (2001: 20-21).

people's wages are proportional to the efforts, or supposedly, we've got innovation, we've got computers, various forms of technology and science, and all that came from, I guess, people wanting to make more money or people wanting more prestige, or people wanting to improve their families' living standards. I'd hate to live in a communist country, I'd hate to live in Cuba where I would earn the same amount of money working my butt off in IT as someone that did something that, I don't know, did something that is not as intellectually demanding. So yes, I think the free market brings out the best in people.'

The stock market is often taken as the place which epitomizes the idea that greed has virtue. This is well illustrated in two of Oliver Stone's films, *Wall Street* (1987) and *Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps* (2010), where the main character, Gordon Gekko, famously claims that 'Greed, for lack of a better word, is good'. It is important to note, nevertheless, that this praising of capitalism reworks the meaning of greed by clearly differentiating between two opposed types: 'ugly' and 'sexy' greed.²⁷⁹ As a matter of fact, as Robertson points out, when monetary motivation is invoked as a good thing it is no longer called greed but 'self-interest'. Greed is relegated to the uncontrollable passion and self-interest becomes the reasonable and rational motivation. The morality of capitalist ideology is that as long as the desire for money is controlled by rational thinking, it is acceptable to continue accumulating it.²⁸⁰

Mr Ma's statement of 'I'm greedy' does not morally condemn like Mr Pan's expression of 赌鬼 *dugui*, nor does it argue like Max, for the advantage of desiring money as a motivating mechanism driving the development of society. Contrary to the idea that greed is an uncontrollable passion that needs to be tamed, Mr Ma affirms that being greedy is exactly what makes him an individual, what gives him agency. The assertive statement of 'I'm greedy', however, does not seem to fit very well with the activity of gambling. The very fact of engaging in casino gambling cancels out the objective of greed: acquiring more money. This raises the question of money, and how it is still relevant and meaningful for Chinese gamblers to chase it despite the fact that it escapes

279 I have borrowed the expression 'ugly' and 'sexy' greed from Caryl Churchill's (1990 [1984]) play *Serious Money*.

'There's ugly greedy and sexy greedy, you dope/At the moment you're ugly which is no hope/ If you stay ugly, god knows what your fate is/But sexy greedy is the late eighties.'

280 In this time of economic crisis, greed has become topical which means that the possibility to tame it into self-interest for the good of society is more strongly questioned. In a one-off radio program, called *The Greed Imperative*, traders were probed about their greed (Cowley 23 May 2010). In reaction against the moral assumptions about greed, interviewees were defending themselves, arguing that making money is part of the system they are working in.

them in the long run? Might ideas about money help us to better understand the different positions taken by Tom, Mr Ma and Mr Pan?

The myth of Tantalus' enigma

Positing greed for money as an explanation for gambling in the casino raises a number of questions. It gives the impression that gamblers are pursuing a vain dream, where money is just a mirage, the illusion of a better life which will never be realised. While maintaining dreams of winning the jackpot on one level, gamblers are also aware of the (near-)impossibility of this reality. Depending on their luck of the day and how long they have been gambling, their discourses tend to emphasise one aspect more than the other. Besides talk about making it big, gamblers frequently complain that the house always wins and controls everything. In that vein, Ahmei gives me an interesting insight into why gamblers jeopardize their fantasy of success, which pictures them as being hostages, like Tantalus, of their desires. Tantalus, a character of Greek mythology was, like Sisyphus, condemned by the gods to an eternal punishment in Hell. His crime was to have tried to be the equal of gods, to reach the unattainable. Tantalus is described to have stolen ambrosia and nectar, the food and drink of gods in order to reveal their secret to humanity and to have killed his son and fed him to the gods (Graves 1961 [1955]: 387). The gods were not duped and noticed what they had been given to eat. As a punishment for these two crimes, Tantalus had to stand in a pool of water beneath a fruit tree with low branches. Whenever he reached for a fruit, the branches retracted out of his grasp, and whenever he bent down to drink, the water receded before he could get any (1961 [1955]: 387-388). This painful image of insatiable desire is chosen by Ahmei to help me understand gambling.

‘It’s like if there was a very nice apple in the front of you, that you could nearly grab, but you are not able to. And as you jump further up to grab this nice apple, it pulls away from you a bit further, it goes a bit further away. It doesn’t let you. I’m jumping higher hoping the apple will let me grab it, but it doesn’t. That’s the way gambling is. If I have to jump further up, don’t I need strength? How do I get more strength? I have to go to work to earn money, to eat, to get some money. Once you have that money then you can go and jump again to try to grab the apple, try again. One day I will find a way to attract it into my embrace. But it seems that such an opportunity is like lotto (very rare). All British people

play it, they also play Euromillions, lotto, Thunderball. Why do they all play them? Isn't because they also want to snatch this big apple?'

In Ahmei's words, the myth of Tantalus becomes the myth of the big win; money becomes a necessity on the same level as water or food. In that sense, the metaphor reinforces both the concept of greed I detailed above and the myth of Tantalus itself. It interestingly exposes how desiring money throws the gambler into a chain of repeated events which never ends since the object of desire, winning lots of money, can never be reached. Gambling is the process that keeps people trying. Worse than that, in order to feed this desire gamblers have to work to earn money to gamble. It is as if, contrary to the dream of not having to work anymore that drives many of the Chinese gamblers (see Chapter 6), gambling ensures that they are enslaved more deeply within alienable working conditions.

'Gradually, you don't want to work anymore. Why would you? You earn money far too slowly. But, why do we still have to go to work? That's because you've lost all the money you had. If you don't have any money anymore, and you don't work, you don't have money to go gambling again. So, *you mustn't not go to work*. For example, if you say 'Today I'm going gambling, I'm not going to work', you will certainly lose it all. If you do not go this week to earn your £200, you won't be able to use it for gambling, you won't have the opportunity to win the money from before. That's why you have no alternative than go to work. Earn your salary and then go gambling, and once you've finished gambling go to work again. *You don't really want to do this job, but you're forced to since you don't have any money anymore. You have to earn your gambling stake, the money for gambling, so that you can go gambling*. So why are there people who painfully earn money and then go and spend it in the casino?'

By gambling money, gamblers are giving up, it seems, their hope for a better future and trapping themselves in a vicious circle where all that matters is to carry on gambling. 'What keeps them going?' is a question which has puzzled and keeps puzzling researchers, family members, care providers and gamblers themselves. Ahmei also wonders:

'Since I've started gambling, I feel that there is nothing that attracts my interest as much as gambling does. I don't know why.'

Unsure of why she cannot help going back to the casino, she concludes, unconvinced, that the only explanation possible is greed:

‘I don’t know why I can’t control myself, maybe it’s because I’m greedy. I wish I could win a lot, a lot of money with a very small capital. That must be being greedy. But this kind of opportunity (doesn’t really happen)...’

Her hesitation is understandable. Somehow she wonders how she can be greedy about something that, she pertinently knows will not happen, like Tantalus does. In her metaphor of the unreachable apple resides a paradox: how can gamblers be greedy for money, when the more they gamble, the less they get? Does not gambling defeat the mere and only objective of greed: get more money? As remarked Mr Ma, the character for ‘greed’ in Chinese *tan* 贪 looks fascinatingly similar to the character for ‘being poor’ *pin* 贫. It is a well-known fact that gambling does not make you rich, he emphasises:

‘If you could get rich by gambling, you would have got rich a dozens of years ago.’

On the same note, Mr Yu describes gamblers’ greed as the ‘greed for small gains’ 贪小便宜 *tan xiao pianyi*. By this, he refers to the way gamblers are strongly attached to the free perks, such as free coffees and free food, they get from the casino, which obviously are very small gains compared to the actual amount of money gamblers have lost in the casino.²⁸¹ It is in that sense that gamblers are behaving like Tantalus, by desiring the unattainable. Not only they are not getting what they want but they are making it even more impossible as they carry on trying. So what is that greed Tom and Mr Ma talk about? What does it mean for them to be greedy? Answers to these questions will take shape in the next section under my observations of how the power of money is not held or spent but circulated on a rotating movement of spending and accumulation.

Keep the money flowing

To understand greed, it is important to consider the object that is being desired, that is to say money. In a semantic description of the term, Robertson recalls that originally greed describes excessive desire about food, rather like ‘gluttony, voracity [and] ravenousness’ (2001: 13). Its association with material accumulation comes later, ‘with

281 Also see Chapter 5 and Ahmei’s point about how free perks are not free but paid for by money lost by gamblers in the casino.

the growth of mercantile and industrial societies of Europe (2001: 13). The layers of meaning in greed reflect these historical changes.

‘Although today we may be more likely to say someone is greedy for money than food, the meaning is conveyed from gluttony to avarice rather than in the other direction. It is as if the definition of the word has expanded from the inner to the outer man, from the belly to social reputation.’ (2001: 14)

I am interested here in how contact with money exacerbated the immoral properties of greed. As I mentioned in Chapter 1 and as it is more extensively covered in the literature (Gilbert 2005, Leyshon & Thrift 1997, Maurer 2006, Parry & Bloch 1989, Zelizer 1994), money is portrayed to flatten social relationships. The psychologists Lea and Webley (2006) go as far as saying that money is itself addictive, but that unlike most forms of addiction it is a ‘non-substance’, ‘cognitive’ drug. By using the drug metaphor, Lea and Webley argue that the effects of money are similar to ‘a stimulus that is biologically significant’ (2006: 165) but that they are only produced by way of mental processes. Although this question remains very contentious (as shown by the large amount of reviews written in response to Lea & Webley’s (2006) article)²⁸² the abundant and diverse academic debate tackling the issue suggests that money becomes problematic when individuals cannot control their desire to acquire or spend it. As with gambling addiction, it is presented as a problem of controlling selves and desires. Money is not a bad object in itself, it is the inability to use it appropriately, to control desires relating to money that is morally condemned (Robertson 2001: 14). It is only when the desire for money is disproportionate to its actual usefulness as a tool that we refer to greed or to irrational economic behaviour. While greed seems to be reserved for those who are actually making money, irrationality is preferred to describe desire for money which does not materialize as in gambling.²⁸³

Saying this, it has been pointed out before that gambling is obviously not about monetary gains, and that this does not make it an irrational activity. Gambling provides other kinds of rewards, social ones, and a unique opportunity to exert agency. Goffman’s analytical framework (1967) is particularly helpful to understand that neither

282 The article is followed by 23 comments made by 35 individuals and a final reply to all those comments by the authors.

283 As I have shown earlier desiring money is recognised to be an economically legitimate motivation as long as it is contained within reasonable limits. Unreasonable desire for money becomes greed, whereas spending money beyond one’s needs is considered irrational.

losing or winning money are the point in gambling. In that sense, he ‘lifts gambling out of the moral abyss into which successive generations of commentators and reformers have consigned it and renders possible a consideration of its meaning which is freed from a priori associations of a negative kind’ (Downes et al. 1976: 17). In *Where The Action Is: Three Essays*, Goffman argues that in a society where everyday life is uneventful, social beings need challenges to demonstrate strength of character in the eyes of others; an aim satisfied by gambling. Another pioneer, Zola (1967), documents how off-track betting permits punters of an immigrant and working class area in New England city to construct a positive identity for themselves which might not be possible or denied to them outside the premises of the Hoff’s tavern.

More recent ethnographies have shown that gambling offers an opportunity for the affirmation of individuality within a community, in which losing money can even become a way of winning prestige. In Papataxiarchis’ (1999) study of illegal gambling in a Greek village in North Lesbos, attitude can be valued more than proficiency, and as a matter of fact, losers, if they know how to lose with panache, can become notorious figures of the village. In Tahiti, in the name of honour, Tahitians opposing Chinese in a cockfight still engage in a bet against them despite the fact that they know they will inevitably lose (Tremon 2005). Understanding gamblers’ agency is a common leitmotiv, emphasized in greater or lesser degree, in most sociological and anthropological studies of gambling (Altman 1985, Dixey 1987, Geertz 1973, Goodale 1987, Hayano 1982, 1989, Maclure et al. 2006, Malaby 2003, Mann 2003, Mitchell 1988, Neal 1998, 2005, Oxfeld 1993, Papataxiarchis 1999, Parish 2006, Riches 1975, Rosecrance 1986, Sexton 1987, Stewart 1994, Tremon 2005, Woodburn 1982, Zimmer 1986, Zola 1967). This material contrasts with the literature where gamblers are portrayed as passive actors, victims of addiction (see Chapter 6 and previous section). While rehabilitating the central role played by gamblers, these studies (with the exception of Geertz 1973) tend, as I argue in Chapter 1, to assume too readily the nature of money and that gamblers, by gambling it away, disregard it, or just do not consider it a relevant concept to understand gambling behaviour. They underplay the role of money in the expression of gamblers’ agency. They forget Geertz’s insightful comment about cockfighting in Bali that ‘money *does* (...) matter and matter very much’ (1973: 434).

In my fieldwork, I often heard Chinese gamblers talk with admiration about other gamblers who carry on staking money despite losses, without flinching, imperturbably.

Ahmei's story of the Turkish roulette player in Chapter 3 provides a good example. When gambling, what counts is not so much to lose or win but to be ready to put money at stake. This point comes to light in Mr Yu's metaphor of 拼 (命) *pin (ming)*, 'to fight (for life)' that he uses to explain to me what is really at stake in gambling.

'I think we can say that Chinese people 拼 *pin, fight*.²⁸⁴ (...) Gambling is also 拼 *pin*. If you don't have 拼 *pin*, do you dare to gamble? Of course, you don't. For example, if I had £1000, I wouldn't have the guts, I wouldn't dare. The best word, the most beautiful and meaningful is 拼 *pin, fight*. Let's say, I have £500 on me and I go gambling with it. I lose £100, it hurts. However, many *gamblers* are not afraid (of losing). They lose £100, then £200, and another £400. That's what I call *pin*. 拼 *Pin, fight*. Remember this word. Ok? If you don't have this *pin* spirit you don't dare to do anything. It's just like me, I don't really dare to gamble much. I do, but no more than £5-£10, *ok*.²⁸⁵ That's it, I've lost it, I'm done with it. You see other gamblers don't gamble that way. They gamble up to £2-3000. Yesterday I was watching a Vietnamese man. He had £3000 on the table. I was watching how he was gambling. £100, *lost*.²⁸⁶ £200, *lost*. £400... he just continued to increase steadily. Only once he won some money back. 拼 *Pin, fight*. [laugh loudly]. 'It's not you who win, it's me!'

As Mr Yu emphasizes in the last sentence, the winner is not the one who has won all the money, the winner is the one who has the courage to gamble it in the first place and who has a good try. I would not conclude that this attitude shows that Chinese casino players are disinterested about money. As Simmel rightly notes, 'the indifference about the value of money which constitutes the essence and charm of prodigality is possible only because money is actually treasured and assumed to be special' (2003: 137-138). Building on the basis of previous works and mindful of Geertz's assertion, I would like to offer a more nuanced argument. Although it is true that Chinese casino players are resisting the logic of material accumulation, money still plays, I argue, a central and meaningful role to them. Instead of focusing on money as an end in itself, I consider the power that money has for gamblers at the time of action. This will in turn help me to draw out the enigma posed by the myth of Tantalus.

284 The word 'fight' in italic was originally said in English.

285 Ibid. for 'ok'.

286 Ibid. for 'lost'.

What is striking about gamblers is not so much that they win or lose money, or how they do it, but how in both cases they aim to enjoy the power of money *now* and not in an unknown and uncertain future. As shown in Chapter 4, Chinese migrants from a diversity of socio-economic backgrounds have come to the UK with high ambitions of social mobility. From the outset, money drives their migration. ‘The only good thing in the UK is the pound’ was a phrase heard repeatedly. In that respect, the pound, like the dollar, has a stronger value than the RMB. Not only does it offer a good rate of exchange which gets multiplied by ten in RMB, but it also represents a better chance to accomplish a bright future via hard and honest work than with the RMB. As Chu (2007: 24) explains, because RMB wealth is in the hand of officials and elites it is strongly suspected to reproduce social inequalities, whereas prosperity acquired with the dollar, and the pound, ‘suggest[s] that through the alienating and challenging trials of honest labour abroad, the most humble commoners could be transformed into the successful entrepreneurial vanguard of a new Chinese modernity.’ (2007: 24).

That money represents a promise of fulfillment is not unique to Chinese migrants, ‘[p]eople everywhere recognize that money will be a powerful factor in their futures and seek to control it themselves’ (Akin & Robbins 1999: 5). In contrast with objects of display which are exchanged as currency and whose power emanates from the owner’s past deeds, the capacity of modern money can only be realized in the future (Graeber 1996, 2001).

‘Money tends to be represented as an invisible potency because of its capacity to turn into any other thing. Money is the potential for future specificity even if it is a potential that can only be realized through a future act of exchange.’ (1996: 20)

Simmel describes how the attraction for money resides in ‘the notion of ‘possibility’’ it offers in the present by ‘stor[ing] up a merely subjectively anticipatable future’ (1990 [1900]: 242). Although the future is uncertain, ‘the degree of certainty that [money] will materialize at the right moment is extremely high’ (1990 [1900]: 243). This makes money an attractive means to control one’s future. By the act of migrating to a more promising country, Chinese migrants in London are trying to fast forward the success that money promises them and bring the future closer to the present. This movement, I argue, is pushed to an extreme in gambling. Money’s future capacity for action is no longer nurtured; it is relinquished to be experienced immediately, without the inconvenience of years of uncertain waiting. Chinese casino players seem in that respect

quite impatient to enjoy the potentiality of money now, oblivious of future consequences. Tom comments:

‘They gamble like there is no tomorrow, like there is only today. They live for today. They think ‘Oh, my dream is gonna come through, if I put more I get more’. Put more in, get more out. (...) They don’t think about tomorrow they only think about today. They want to win the whole casino in one day, not over a period of time. It’s always greedy people...’

It could be easily argued that their impatience is an impatience to win, driven by their greed. As I have shown in Chapter 3, Chinese casino players find it hard to stop gambling when they are winning. This is because ‘money is not expected to achieve anything for the greedy person over and above its mere ownership’ (Simmel 1990 [1900]: 244). By driving the flow of money towards themselves in winning, gamblers already experience a ‘state of energy’ and ‘ability’ (1990 [1900]: 242) that does not need to be fulfilled in the future.

This endless pursuit for more money only partially represents gamblers’ relationships with money. The argument can be turned around: what they also find hard is to stop spending the money in the first place. Ahmei who was talking explicitly earlier about her desire to win lots of money, equally had a lot to say about her impulse to keep spending the money, even when she was losing. With gambling, ‘the more you gamble, the more money you spend’, Ahmei explains, just ‘like a drug’. When Ahmei started gambling, she would only go with £10 in her pocket which limited her to 90 chips. She would play no more than £2 or £3 worth of chips on the roulette table for each game. Now she can easily go in with £50 or more. With time, Ahmei’s capacity for gambling has increased. Not that she finds it easy to lose, she can still remember the first time she lost £10 and how hard she found it to sleep that night, wondering how she could have lost £10 in the first place. But with time, she just ‘got used to it’ and would play more money.

‘But now when you lose £200, you do not have any reaction anymore. You find that you’re getting used to it! You spend more time gambling, you have more capacity to gamble, the money you’re losing is also growing. The more you lose, the more money (you spend), the more you lose, the more money (you spend).’

Like most gamblers I met Ahmei does not really like to lose the money she painfully earns.²⁸⁷ However, besides the dream of winning money, she has another one, that of spending money free from social obligations. This dream is interlinked with the fantasy of winning the jackpot. When I asked Ahmei what she would do if she won at the lottery, she replies that, after buying a house, a car and a round-the-world trip, she would go to the casino and make sure everyone can see that, at last, she can afford to lose, that is to say to waste the money away.

‘I would take £4000 to the casino, ‘Bang !’, and I would smash it there !!! And make sure the manager see me, see that I brought all that money, I would win them, that’s what I think I would do.’

Ahmei would become a winner just by the simple fact that she can afford to lose so much money, and regardless of whether she actually wins or loses. As much as she never grasps the jackpot, she can never get to the point of having enough money to spend with great ostentation. This, however, does not stop her from dreaming about it. With her friend Song, they have a secret plan, which consists of not going to the casino for at least two or three months, save the not-gambled money during all that time, up to £2-3000, and then go and ‘beat the casino to death’. She uses the very visual metaphor of a gun and ammunition to make her point:

‘Sometimes when I’m tired I’m thinking, I’m telling myself, ‘This time, I don’t go to the casino, and I accumulate some money, I very quickly would save two or three months, about £2-3000. This way, it seems, I would have the guts, like what my friend was saying to me, ‘Every month we put aside £2-300, that much. It’s the same as using a gun, we just don’t have enough ammunitions !’ She said. ‘We both of us don’t have enough ammunitions. We restrain from going for two or three months and accumulate ammunitions, ammunitions to shoot with a gun, accumulate till we have lots !’ Then, I’ll beat you to death, what I mean is we would, both of us, kill the casino, we would take £2000 and we would today happily gamble, ‘Bang, bang, bang, bang ! !’. What I’m saying is that sometimes when we correctly hit a number we don’t have enough money. We don’t have enough to make pressure, we need to accumulate enough ammunitions, once we’ve done that, we can fight.’

287 Ibid. footnote 138, Chapter 4. I prefer to consider gamblers’ attitude towards losing with the same cautious approach I prescribe in Chapter 3 about winning. As shown clearly in this chapter, losing or winning are part of an ongoing process where the two stages constantly follow one after the other.

In her secret plan to ‘kill the casino’, Ahmei is dreaming of being in a position where she can spend money at the whim of her will. She is aspiring to enjoy the same freedom as that of a 大户 *dahu*, big players of the Shanghai stock market, who by becoming successful and rich, have finally achieved what is perceived to be the ultimate freedom in a Chinese context, that of spending one’s money without taking into account its social and future utility. Besides the dream of being rich, she is dreaming of being free from social obligations when spending money.

‘If *dahu* have an obligation, it is to earn and to spend their money actively and freely, that is, without regard to the dense network of relations which characterises economic and social exchange in Shanghai generally. (...) [M]orning dim sum with a beautiful young woman (another stereotypical *dahu* act) is not only a display of sexual license and prestige but also an expression of freedom from the social constraints usually present at expensive meals: in contrast to the self-interested wining and dining which accompanies the *guanxi* system, and which might be conceptualised as ‘investing’ in social relationship, a love-bird breakfast represents an act of pure ‘consumption’, for the woman is not presumed to be of any ‘use’ to the *dahu* in future social relations. And, it now becomes clearer why losing all one’s money on the stock market does not diminish one’s status as a *dahu*: quite the contrary, it may be the ultimate expression of *dahu* freedom that he may squander his money in this way.’ (Hertz 1998:134)

Although many of the Chinese gamblers I met in the casino have not attained financial success of any sort and for some it is obvious that their chance will never come, they still aspire to the same freedom of action as the 大户 *dahu*, to squander one’s money away. As a matter of fact, they are already behaving as 大户 *dahu* as if they had no need to use the money they gamble in better and more socially useful ways. In that respect, gambling is similar to the ‘daring consumption’ of Malagasy miners’ where money is spent boldly and splashily ‘with little regard for potential consequences’ (Walsh 2003: 296). This is because Malagasy miners’ lavish acts of consumption are not meant to get them success, but to show what they already are. In that sense it can be said that Chinese gamblers are refusing or even doubtful about the invisible power that money will grant them in the future. They prefer, as short as it is, to enjoy the power of its consumption now, just like Malagasy miners.

‘[T]he ‘dream’ of a life where money is no object was more than just imagined; it was actually lived out, albeit only momentarily.’ (2003: 299)

This argument strongly echoes Campbell's theory of modern consumerism, (which although it could be argued not to be specifically modern (see Graeber 2007: 65)), makes the important point that desire for objects is a form of pleasure in itself, an 'enjoyable discomfort' where 'wanting rather than having (...) is the main focus of pleasure-seeking' (Campbell 2005 [1987]: 86). That is what Leo, a BBC in his early 30s, expresses about gambling. For him, the time just before the result comes out is the most exciting; he enjoys the anticipation.

'The most exciting time is when the ball is spinning not when it is stopping'

What is interesting is that for Ahmei and other Chinese casino players, the pleasure does not just reside in the consumption of money or in its acquisition but in both. As much as gamblers do not want to wait for another day to win money and want to win it now, they do not want to wait for an unknown future to enjoy the fruits of the money coming their way. Simmel's essay *The Miser and the Spendthrift* nicely disentangles these contradictory attitudes. As Simmel eloquently demonstrates, the miser and the spendthrift are closer in their behaviour than we think. The miser gets a complete sense of power and satisfaction in the sheer possession of money, that is to say of 'a potentiality with no thought whatsoever about its realisation' (2003: 136). The spendthrift in comparison gets a complete sense of power and satisfaction in the sheer consumption of money, that is to say a potentiality fully realized even if it also means the end of it. Despite their polarization, both miser and spendthrift are characterised by the same immoderation in satisfying an infinite desire to enjoy the pure potentiality of money. The difference is that one seeks this potentiality in the possession of it, while the other seeks it in spending it. Chinese casino players are, in that respect, both miser and spendthrift.

'The life of the spendthrift is marked by the same demonic formula as that of the miser: every pleasure attained arouses the desire for further pleasure, which can never be satisfied. Satisfaction can never be gained because it is being sought in a form that from the beginning foregoes its end and is confined to means and to the moment before fulfillment.' (2003: 139)

Both miser and spendthrift, however, are limited by the very nature of money which needs to be circulated. As much as money can never been possessed indefinitely (Graeber 1996, Simmel 2003), nor can it be consumed totally (Akin & Robbins 1999). Hoarding money is only temporarily withdrawing it from circulation (Graeber 1996)

and consuming money does not destroy it since its value is ‘purposelessly converted into other values’ (Simmel 2003: 137). This makes the constant circulation of money the best way to benefit from the power of money. ‘Money is like water’ Little Yi told me, by which analogy he meant that money must be spent in the first place if one wants money to flow back.²⁸⁸ Money must always be on the move. This is similar to the way Malagasy miners, by circulating money in ‘daring consumption’ ensure that more opportunities to gain money in the mining extraction of sapphire will happen. Stopping to consume daringly would mean preventing luck from coming their way (Walsh 2003). In gambling, the circulation of money is pushed to extremity. The succession of acquisition and spending is really fast, and although this means that their enjoyment is short, it also means that many more opportunities to be lucky will come (see Chapter 6).²⁸⁹ Money’s power is enjoyed immediately and temporarily, but on a repeated basis, as long as money circulates. By gambling in the casino, the power of money can be mastered without having to reach a desired state of achievement that might never come. Gambling money defeats the very idea of an end, idealized in success, where the hidden inner powers of the individual are finally revealed.

What matters is not so much to reach the end than to keep trying. In a way, gambling shows that the conception of an end is flawed since every time you win, your winnings are put at stake again. This resonates with the fact that success is not a permanent state and can be reversed at any time by turns of fate (see Chapter 4). To some extent, gambling in the casino is similar to trading in the market where the promise of fulfillment is constantly deferred (Knorr Cetina forthcoming). The difference is that gamblers in the casino are trying to construct a positive self in the time of action despite the knowledge that their ineluctable end is to lose. Because the future is uncertain or does not hold any promise of fulfillment anymore, they would rather focus on the present opportunities to become, how fleeting they are. This is what is attractive about gambling: to carry on fighting and becoming despite the uncertainty or lack of prospects, to carry on desiring even if the object of desire will never be reached. In that

288 The new biggest casino in Macao, the Venitian, was eager to exploit this analogy literally by building in a small river going through the casino, alike a little Venice. According to Little Yi, in fengshui, water is a strong symbol to attract money.

289 As Rebecca Cassidy pointed out to me this shares the same logic as the ‘multiplier effect’ in Keynesian economics whereby in order to increase production the government is encouraged to increase spending. The principle is simple: to accumulate you spend. When translated into individual behaviour this translates as: you invest your activities into the system and hope that some of it returns to you.

respect, what argued Camus (1942) about Sisyphus²⁹⁰ is valid for Tantalus and the gambler. Because he is totally aware of his fate, that there is no hope, he can make the most of now, '[o]ne must imagine [Tantalus/the gambler] happy' (1942: 166, my translation). The endless circulation of money in the casino provides a framework for the production of individuals despite what is happening (or not) for them outside the casino. This movement of money in gambling is reminiscent of the endless circulation of money in 关系 *guanxi* networks and how it constitutes the Chinese person.

Connecting, disconnecting and the ongoing circulation of money

As much as I was surprised to hear some Chinese gamblers saying that they were greedy, it did not seem as improbable as if it had come from British gamblers. This, I just could not imagine. To some extent, my bewilderment with greed reminded me of my first encounters with Chinese people in China. Questions about how much I earned, how much I had spent for this or that, how much money I should pay and more kept embarrassing me by exposing my prudish attitude towards money. Chinese people seemed abruptly materialistic in a way which did not fit my idea of making friends and socialising. This is a common initial struggle, or at least an intriguing difference, for newcomers to China.

'Westerners encountering Chinese culture for the first time are often struck by Chinese attitudes toward money. In the first stages of culture shock, one concludes that anything can be bought or sold, that money and its manipulation are the prime topics of conversation, and that money is an untarnished and absolute good. Missionaries and travelers from Europe, America, and Japan noted the same phenomenon in the nineteenth century.' (Gates 1987: 262)

However, as I got to spend some time with Chinese people, I learnt to read beyond my first impression of this blunt utilitarianism. Their overt interest in money did not mean they were less able to make social connections. On the contrary, money is given such importance precisely because it plays a strong role in the making and unmaking of social relationships, and as such in the creation of personhood.

290 Sisyphus is another mythical character condemned to an eternal punishment in hell. He has to roll a rock to the top of a hill. As he nearly reaches the summit, the rock bounces to the very bottom once more. Sisyphus then has to run down and start to roll it up again (Graves 1961 [1955]: 218).

A good example of money importance is Yan's (1996) description of 关系 *guanxi* networks in Xiajia village which morally and economically binds its residents through an endless process of gift-giving. The networks consist of different levels of personal relations which are established from each individual into three categories ranging from social closeness to social distance: 'a 'personal core' of close relatives', 'a 'reliable zone' of good friends and less close relatives' and 'an 'effective zone' of relatives and friends in a broader sense' (1996: 4). The structure is not fixed but dynamic: social relations are made and maintained by the flow of goods and money in gifts or loans or they are unmade by failing to participate. In Xiajia, '[t]hose who do not cultivate such networks are relegated to socially disadvantaged positions', which is equivalent to 'social death' (1996: 8). 关系 *Guanxi* exchanges in Xiajia creates a 'local moral world' where Xiajia residents learn 'how to be a proper person (...) within the village boundaries' (1996: 22). It is thus 'a social instrument by which one defines oneself as well as others' (1996: 23). In this framework, 'the pursuit of personal interest is intermingled with the fulfillment of moral obligations' (1996: 22), personal goals are interdependent with the reproduction of a social order.

According to Yan, beyond the local world of the village, that is to say '[w]hen the villagers encounter outsiders', 关系 *guanxi* then becomes only concerned with the utilitarian pursuit of personal gains and 'has little to do with the cultural construction of personhood' (1996: 23). This 'extended form of 关系 *guanxi*', as Yan calls it, is a result of the 'increase of instrumentality, cynicism and utilitarianism in interpersonal relations' (1996: 25). This change in interpersonal relations correlates what I have shown in Chapter 1, that the thirst for money and getting rich is thriving within China, shaping a more individualistic Chinese person. However, instead of perceiving the individualisation of Chinese society as a radical change, I prefer to argue that this more individualistic Chinese person is still rooted in the conception of personhood which exists in the local moral world of Xiajia. Here, I align myself with the more nuanced argument of Akin & Robbins about the impact of modern money, developed in the context of money introduction in Melanesian societies. They rightly demonstrate that in those societies '[I]ndividualist forms of agency are not entirely novel' and that the introduction of money does trigger 'individualist forms of agency' but 'strengthens them and allow them a wider sphere of influence' (1999: 31). I argue that a similar process takes place for Chinese people in China and beyond where they migrate, and

that this process is particularly salient in the context of migration abroad, such as in the context of my research in the UK. Also as I argued in Chapter 1, the concept of the individual in Chinese culture is not new.

The question of how to construct oneself in relation to others is still relevant despite the changes taking place in China and as a result of migration, but it has become less obvious. That is why when some of my interlocutors said to me, as I probed them more about greed, that to be greedy is ‘to be human’, it did not make much sense at first. For Ying, for example, being greedy is a good thing since it shows that you have desires. He argues that it is what differentiates us from other living creatures such as plants:

‘You can't say that greed is just about money, everybody, obviously, has desires. Everybody. So, you can say: without greed you're not a human being. (...) If you think there is no greed, it's like being equal to a plant.’

Graeber's (2007) essay about desire illuminates this quote since he demonstrates that desire is, against what we are made to believe with the ideology of consumption, about social relationships.

‘Desire is the result of an individual receiving sense impressions from outside. Now, it is certainly true that this one very common experience of desire: as something that seems to seize us from outside our conscious control, let alone better judgment, and often, cause us to do things for which we would really rather not hold ourselves entirely responsible. But it also allows us to overlook the fact that desire emerges in relations between people.’
(2007: 68)

Greed, in that sense, contrary to the way ‘we tend to think of it as the epitome of selfishness or introversion or egotism’ (Robertson 2001: 19), is intrinsically social. Greed basically ‘is meaningless without references to others, without some sort of social framework’ (2001: 19), without asking ‘who is being greedy about what, when, and in relation to whom’ (2001: 22). To understand greed, it is necessary to take into account the social relationships that produce it since greed can only be felt in relation to others. In that respect, the greed expressed by some Chinese gamblers shares certain similarities with the way envy is felt in three villages in North China where windfall wealth has changed the social dynamic as a result of the growing mining industry (Zhang 2010). Envy in that context emerges in relation to other people's good fortune which reminds the less fortunate that they have not fulfilled this desire of theirs and nor do they have the ability to satisfy it (Zhang 2010). Gamblers who admit to being greedy

have on the contrary a positive perception of themselves and believe in their ability to become and have, as it is clearly apparent in the case of Mr Ma. While envy is about ‘mak[ing] the other less’, greed is about ‘desir[ing] to be more’ (2010: 126).²⁹¹ And the objective of this desire to be more is to grow as others have, like those who have got rich first. This desire to grow, which is fundamentally human as Ying and some other of my interlocutors describe it, is interdependent with other individuals. As Hart argues, ‘[t]here are two prerequisites for being human: we must each learn to be self-reliant to a high degree and to belong to others, merging our identities in a bewildering variety of social relationships’ (2007b: 14). This tension comes up evidently in Max. For Max, being selfish is only a temporary state while he makes his business plan take off and becomes rich. Once he is rich, he will not have to be selfish anymore and will be able to give money away to whichever cause he thinks is worthwhile. When he reaches this position, he is keen to give money to charities which lend money (with no interest other than inflation) to poor people in the world.

In this tense and ambiguous relationship between the self and others, money plays a central role. Although Ying earlier explained that greed was not just about money, not having money for him clearly equals not having friends, not existing fully as an individual, and therefore constitutes social death:

‘If you don’t have any money, to drink some alcohol with friends, where do you go with them? Everybody avoids you if you don’t have any money.’

For Ying, money is essential to make that happen, money is necessary to exist as an individual in society. The lack of social connections is the result of not having money to spend with friends, and inevitably means that Ying is unable to exist as a full person. Being greedy, for Ying, is wanting to have money in order to link and socialize with others, so he can exist as an individual. During fieldwork, Ying as far as I could observe, spent a lot of time on his own, and it was rare for him to socialize with some of his friends.²⁹² Like most gamblers I spent time with, my interaction with Ying rarely involved other individuals (see Chapter 1). Ying was nostalgic about the time when he was more fluent with money and played regularly at baccarat. He wished he had known

291 Zhang is quoting Fernández de la Mora: (1987: 68). ‘The envious one does not find dominant the desire to be more, but rather to make the other less; there is no will to improve, but rather to level all.’

292 I can only remember one occasion where we went to restaurant with two Fujianese friends of Ying.

me then. What Ying meant made more sense as I recall one unusual instance where money played an obvious role in relationship making in the casino.

One day I came to the Golden Nugget, one of my usual interlocutors introduced me to two new men, Uncle Ji from Singapore and Wenbo from Malaysia. As we were sitting around a round table at the bar, I was really struck by the way that Uncle Ji would spend money on all the people who kept turning up at the table. This was a practice that I frequently witnessed when I lived in China and when I did my fieldwork among Chinese overseas in Ho Chi Minh City. However, it was far less common in the UK and even less so in the casino. It was the first time (and only time to that degree) that I observed it in the casino. I was even more struck, though, by Uncle Ji's friend, Wenbo, who kept inviting people to have a drink or some food saying that Uncle Ji would pay for it. He kept repeating this to me and insisting heavily that whatever I wanted to have I should ask for, to the point where I felt really embarrassed. As he explained that earlier they were at the karaoke in Chinatown where he spent £400, things became clearer to me. Earlier he was in the position of the spender but his money had not been lost in vain. It had created more bonding between him and his friends. And now he was laying the foundation of a new friendship with me. This corresponded with what Wenbo was saying, that gambling was 'not about losing or winning' but about 'making friends' and 'being happy'. He had just lost £50 at the new Pai Gow Poker but it did not matter. What mattered is that he did spend that money and did not keep it, selfishly, for himself.

This instance of socializing that I describe is actually something that I hardly observed taking place among Chinese casino players. As a matter of fact, I was more often witness to how Chinese gamblers distrust each other. The casino, as I explained in Chapter 5, is a place of loose social connections which also means that there is a very loose sense of social obligations towards other gamblers. This did not necessarily mean that Chinese gamblers had poor access to social networks, but there were noticeable disparities as to the kind of social networks they would or not participate in outside the casino. In that respect, the casino could become a place of great importance in their life or just be one of the numerous places where they would go to relax (see Chapter 5). The feeling of greed that some individuals expressed cannot be understood without taking into account how they are, or are not, connected with other individuals and the part money plays in these connections, that is to say how it makes and unmakes them.

The argument I am making here is reverse and complementary to the one so brilliantly argued by Parry (1985) about the ideology of the ‘pure gift’. As much as there is ‘pure gift’, it is clear that there is no such thing as a ‘purely interested individual pursuit of utility’, as it is portrayed in greed. In that respect, what Parry said about the ‘pure gift’ can be replicated for greed.

‘[T]he notion of ‘[greed]’ is mere ideological obfuscation which masks the supposedly *non*-ideological verity that nobody does [everything out of pure individual interest only].’ (1985: 455)

As much as there is no total altruism, nor is there total selfishness. As Graeber has noted, ‘we rely on other people for just about everything’ (2001: 221), something that the partible quality of money enables us to overlook. So, wanting money, that is to say greed, for the Chinese casino players of my research is a desire to grow individually, not without but, in connection to those they choose to be connected to. This is a particularly critical point in London where Chinese people’s sense of personhood constructed via connection with other individuals is a process which is challenged by migration and the course of adaptation in the UK. Migrants are pushed outside the safe remit of a local and known web of relationships into an alien environment, and are forced to adapt and re-create a social dynamic on different terms. In this process of becoming, ‘gambling is an opening up, one of the processes by which relations and therefore people change over time’ (Cassidy 2010: 141). A way to better understand how individuals reproduce themselves in gambling is to take into account not just the ‘individual’ but also the ‘dividual’²⁹³ that is to say the way in which every gambler is connected with others (Cassidy 2010).

‘Because of the peculiar temporal orientation of gambling, gamblers are always obviously pending: their status is dependent upon the outcome of events that act on relationships with other people, animals, machines, processes and objects.’ (2010: 141)

Gambling is a powerful and intense metaphor of personhood in the making which is enabled by the constant circulation of money. The ‘dividual’ connects the individual to others through the exchange of money, even if not directly.²⁹⁴ So money does not

293 By ‘dividual’, here Cassidy refers to the Melanesian literature (Strathern 1988, 1992, Wagner 1991)

294 In a similar fashion Chu (2004) shows that the relatives of Fujianese migrants burn money to the gods as a way to connect to their family members who have migrated abroad.

produce a more individualistic individual: it creates and destroys both connections, and freedom from connections.

These observations about greed and money among Chinese casino players in London interestingly resonate with the social changes noticed by Yan in the practice of bridewealth in rural contemporary China (2005). Based on 15 years²⁹⁵ of fieldwork in a village in North China, Yan (2005) explores how the bridewealth has changed after its supposed eradication by the communist regime to become a ‘greedy’ demand for exorbitant amounts by the bride and the groom that their parents would never have dreamt of requesting (2005: 643). The bride, who does the negotiations, justifies such a vast payment in compensation for their contribution in the family economy, a claim which is contested by the parents. But more interestingly I find, she describes her selfish and individual act as necessary for the construction of her own family.

‘[I]t is now the bride, not her parents, who receives the bridewealth and, working together with the groom, she takes the lead in bargaining for the highest possible amount of bridewealth from the groom’s parents, often pushing the parents deeply into debt. To justify their demands for lavish bridewealth, village youth resort to the notion of individual property rights and the rhetoric of individualism, effectively transforming the bridewealth institution into a new form of property division.’ (2005: 638)

For Yan, the key to this staggering act resides in the way selfishness has now become ‘a necessity for success in the market economy’ in China advocated under the rhetoric of individualism. What it means to be individualistic is re-adapted to suit the situation. The element of self-reliance and self-constraint characteristic of ‘Western individualism’, Yan argues, are completely left out by the Chinese youth who strive to obtain their independence ‘at the direct expense of the independence of their parents and younger siblings’ (2005: 647). Yan qualifies their attitude of ‘utilitarian individualism’.

However, the self-interest in desiring more money cannot be limited to a detached individual and needs to take into account other people that the individual is or chooses to be connected with and who would benefit from his greed. In the upshot, the huge sum asked by the bride is obviously not greed or selfishness in the eyes of the groom and their yet-to-be-born children.

²⁹⁵ During the 1980s and 1990s (Yan 2005: 639).

‘The deeper motivation for young women to pursue costly bridewealth is to build for the future prosperity of the conjugal family, bride and groom together’ (2005: 643)

In that respect, the bride’s request creates a conflict of interests with the larger model of the patriarchal family and continues ‘an ancient struggle between the generations’ (Robertson 2001: 190). ‘[R]omantic images of the family as the heartland where selfish material calculation yields to perfect altruism’ (2001: 188) is nothing but a myth since families are not fixed groups but ‘subjectively based (‘ego-centered’) networks’ (2001: 189). Generational tensions further illustrate that greed is always a matter of point of view depending on which perspective it is looked at from: is the greed being exhibited standing for or against me/us?

‘[T]he ‘self’ in selfishness can be plural, a group or category of persons whose actions are judged together. Viewed from within, struggling to get more food for your family, or more wealth for your nation, is an honorable ambition. Your children or your subjects will admire you, and greediness will be essentially in the eyes of other families or other nations who feel relatively deprived.’ (2001: 22)

This important point, I argue, brings into question Yan’s model of individualism.

As Steinmüller (2009) has remarked before about Yan’s monography, through the outline of Yan’s analysis can be discerned a moral project in the call for an individualism ‘rightly understood’ (2009: 19). I feel that his focus on the need to be self-reliant in order to be an accomplished individual misses the important point that individuals are never fully autonomous and always rely on their relationships with others for their development, whether they acknowledge this or not. This conception of the individual that Yan refers to is based on the ‘Western’ tradition, where the individual is considered as an autonomous subject who, in order to keep his independence, must constrain himself to allow others to exercise their right to autonomy (2005: 647). The phenomenon of selfish individualism that Yan describes is less to do with misunderstandings of this model, and more as I have just shown about greed, with how individuals become and grow by connecting or not with others. The problem is that this ‘Western’ conception that Yan uses as paradigm disregards the part that makes us in others.

Forgetting the social relationships that make an individual has been strongly criticised by feminists who argue against the economic model of the rational man, and against a

supposedly ‘self-made man’, oblivious of the social relations that make and made him (Helgesson 2005: 37). According to feminist Nelson, economists are carrying on Hobbes’ notion of a ‘mushroom man’, already made, who ‘springs up fully formed, with preferences fully developed, and is fully active and self-contained’ (1995: 135). She carries on:

‘As in our Robinson Crusoe stories, he has no childhood or old age, no dependence on anyone, and no responsibility for anyone but himself. The environment has no effect on him, but rather is merely the passive material over which his rationality has play. Economic man interacts in society without being influenced by society: his mode of interaction is through an ideal market in which prices form the only, and only necessary, form of communication’ (1995: 135)’

Self-reliance is caricatured in this description of *homo economicus* as a model of behaviour, the point though is, as Gudeman rightly reminds us, that ‘even the most market-driven actor (...) relies on the presence of communal relations and resources for its success’ (2001: 2).

Bearing this in mind, successes and failures urgently need to be reconsidered beyond the individual perspective. Chinese migrants’ projects are incomplete without taking into account others who strongly support the individual migrant and/or benefit from his endeavour.²⁹⁶ The apparent failure in accomplishing a dream of riches can then be read differently. This, I believe, is well illustrated by the case of Ahmei and her daughter who thanks to her mother’s continuous sacrifices, has moved up socially and has access to far more opportunities than her mother ever had. Their conjoint effort is more widely representative of British Born Chinese who are obtaining better social positions than those of their parents who worked hard for such opportunities to be given to their children (Benton & Gomez 2008, see Chapter 4) Who should success be attributed to? And in whose eyes is it success? The concept of the individual is strongly linked to the dominant idea of appropriate economic behaviour and achievement.

The process of individualization that Yan develops in more detail in his book *The Individualisation of Chinese Society* underplays the fact that individual forms of agency already existed in China before the economic and social changes he describes. What we

²⁹⁶ The burden of the social pressure to achieve is not to be neglected here. This was made evident in Chapter 6 where the circulation of money in gambling was not just a way to connect to others but also provided freedom from the social obligations that connections create, and as such enable people to resist the dominant model of success.

are actually observing is not the arrival of individualism but the strengthening, developing and redefinition of existing forms of individuality and of the social dynamics which make an individual.

Conclusion

In contrast to other situations in life where the flow of money is uncertain or limited, in gambling it is highly fluent and controlled by the gambler, facilitated by the sense of time and space created by the casino. The main anxiety consists in not having enough money to continue gambling. This anxiety, I would argue, is linked to a bigger one, the end of the circulation of money, which means the end of the self. By showing that the conception of an end is flawed and making sure that the money keeps flowing, Chinese gamblers are implicitly showing that the only possible end is death. De Coppet's (1970) study of money circulation in the course of a funeral and a man / woman's life amongst the Are'are of Papua New Guinea illustrates how 'the most important function of the circulation of money is the way in which it measures the passage of time' (Crump referring to de Coppet's work 1990: 87) and 'the events which define a man's life until his complete disappearance beyond the land of the dead' (de Coppet 1970: 37, translation by Crump 1990). In that perspective, maintaining the circulation of money is essential to the construction of persons in society.

'In order to stave off an always pending danger, money must leave you and come back; it must be constantly circulated. The more it is exchanged, the more it is circulated, the more it becomes currency; the more it attests to the ceaseless activity of social beings, the more it delineates the path from life to death; the more it forces human beings to go with the flow of time, the more it helps them to live in the face of death.' (de Coppet 1970 : 38, my translation)²⁹⁷

In gambling, this movement carries on until it becomes impossible, because the weight of debts have become too heavy and unsustainable in the individual's life outside the casino. This is reflected in the way Mr Ma has reached 'disillusion' (see Chapter 6), and

297 Original quote in French: 'Il faut, pour parer au danger toujours menaçant, que la monnaie vous quitte et vous revienne et que sans cesse tourne la ronde des échanges. Plus elle tourne, plus elle circule, plus est monnaie; plus elle témoigne de l'inlassable activité des hommes, mieux elle figure la course de la vie à la mort; plus elle contraint les hommes à ne jamais arrêter le temps, mieux elle les conduit à vivre avec la mort.'

which, according to him, is not much different from death. Reaching disillusion particularly fits his description of what he calls a ‘gambling boy’.

‘In theory, gambling boys are cheap, we can gamble anything we like, anywhere we like, any game we like, any length we like. Nobody pay for us, for doing so. But in fact, gambling boys are expensive. It can be so expensive that at the end you can’t afford it, that at the end you die in the street. Gambling looks affordable, but it’s not.’

‘You don’t need to pay tax, don’t need to hire somebody for you. You don’t ever need to pay for you own food and drink. Gamblers are cheap because you don’t need to pay for all these things but you pay for your life in the end’.

Gamblers entertain the idea that money is almighty, the ultimate freedom. This way they reject the side of money that restrains freedom in one way or another in their life. By gambling money, they address their unfulfilled desire for agency. They are greedy for a time where they are not trapped by the imperative of making money, where time is not instrumentalised to the aim of making money, but where time and money contribute to their personhood. However, by advocating a freedom which is free from any form of social obligations, they are also making it impossible in the long run to fully become as an individual. Yuan Ting, who managed to stop gambling and sort out his debts, learnt this the hard way. He learnt that ‘[t]he alleged freedom and unchecked power of money [is] improbable’ (Zelizer 1994: 19), that money is not all powerful as he thought.

‘Now I find, really, money sometimes, having all the money you want, sometimes can’t buy you everything, or make you achieve everything you want. You can’t rely on money to achieve something.’

He learnt that the power of money only takes shape when it is embedded in social relationships (Zelizer 1994). As Graeber argues, ‘unless one wishes to live a solitary life, freedom largely means the freedom to chose what sort of obligations one wishes to enter into, and whom’ (2001: 221), that is what Yuan Ting has come to understand. However, Yuan Ting is still in his late 20s, (in contrast with Mr Ma who is in his 70s), most of Yuan Ting’s life is still ahead of him. It then seems normal that Yuan Ting still expresses hope and reshapes his ambitions to more realizable ones, and is not disillusioned like Mr Ma who has already been through most of his life. This demonstrates not only how money, but also greed, paces the rhythm of one’s life, and basically evolves as our bodies get older (Robertson 2001). Ahmei who is already well advanced in her life is aware that her opportunities are shrinking. By gambling she does

not only compensate for a more uncertain or restricted future but also for a time that is gone. As greed evolves with our bodies, it also responds to the need to adapt to new and challenging situations. Money, because of its versatility, is a great tool to redefine oneself in situations of great change, such as the ones taking place in China or endured by migratory trajectories. Wanting money, or 'being greedy' in that sense reflects the necessity for an individual to adapt and redefine the self within a new and/or changing environment, whether because of age or position.

This feeling of greed takes a more definite shape in London. Its encounter with another kind of greed, that of the London casino industry's search for profitable markets, exacerbates and facilitates its expression. In contrast to an uncertain and unpromising future within their lives outside the casino, gamblers' desire to grow finds in the casino a multitude of opportunities to be satisfied. Although the impression is given that these opportunities can be enjoyed indefinitely, greed becomes meaningless without this part that connects the individual with others.

Conclusion

People in motion, money in motion

In the introduction, I shared the initial difficulties I faced when embarking upon my research. The journey in this thesis started with laying the foundations of a more flexible and open approach to gambling, and being Chinese, that would account for the specific gambling environment of Chinese casino players in London. For this purpose, I focused instead on the way gambling practices were relevant to my different interlocutors in the context of their lives in London. This opened up a rich array of productive questions which took my research beyond common expectations of what gambling research, or indeed studies of Chinese overseas, should be dealing with. Guided by the ethnographic data, the venture developed in connection with the fertile themes of individualism, time, migration, casino space, luck and money. In that respect, the contribution of this thesis reaches far beyond the theme of gambling.

All these different stages contributed in one way or another to describing how gambling in some London casinos provides a variety of Chinese individuals shaped by different life events and circumstances with the opportunity to continue to change, and become, regardless of the vicissitudes of life. In order to better understand this argument and how it differs from previous ones demonstrating that gamblers are not passive actors, I would like to leave behind the original emphasis on Chinese and gambling to bring to the forefront themes which have been quietly weaving through this thesis. For this, I shall explore the following question: What sorts of migrants and individuals are Chinese casino players?

Moving when stuck: differentiated and multiple ways to experience mobility in migration

Once you become a ‘regular’ casino goer, it is always a delight to watch newcomers, and their surprise and disappointment at how the scenery does not match their expectations of entering a James Bond set. ‘The staff are not even nicely dressed!’ a French girl once complained to her boyfriend who took her out at the Golden Nugget. I

have strong visual memories of the time I first stepped in there myself. The first minutes of setting foot in the main room still play back in slow motion. I was overwhelmed by the newness of it, the décor, the business around the gambling tables, the total unfamiliarity of a unique environment. How could I have guessed I would be entering a foreign land right on my doorstep? In this plenum of yet to be discovered information, my first reaction was directed at casino occupiers. Yes, there were many Chinese faces among them, but I was expecting this. What did strike me, was the high proportion of non-White looking individuals. I remember thinking ‘Where are the British (or ‘White others’²⁹⁸, like me)?’ This feeling would often resurge in subsequent visits, especially at times outside weekends when regulars ruled. In the casino, the Chinese were not unusual, they were part of the majority, a majority that was always there and seemed to belong to the surroundings and furniture: those who, and those whose parents and grandparents, had migrated away from a homeland and now lived in the UK. In contrast to the sights of London streets, the Chinese, like many other casino goers, did not look like outsiders anymore.

As an end point in this thesis, I propose to revisit my very first image of the casino as a liminal space for errant migrants uprooted from far away lands. To some extent, my research shows that it is not fortuitous if the high interest in gambling activities among Chinese people in London converges with the drive of a migrant population for making some money quickly, entrepreneurship, and achieving a better future. In Chapter 4, Chinese migrants’ unrelenting desire to leave home for more promising horizons was examined from the point of arrival. Invariably, the reality of life in the UK did not square with what was hoped for during the pre-departure excitement. However, the difficulties of the challenge and the ability to cope with life in the UK varied greatly according to the social and economic resources available to each individual. A deep gap was noticed between those who were able to turn the migration experience into rewards and those for whom this was virtually impossible. Back in China and in other places of origin, those who could leave abroad were the lucky ones compared to those who were stuck in eternal limbo, waiting for a ticket to the West (Chu 2004, 2006). However, once in the UK, real mobility was only within reach of an elite group. Sadly, those who

298 After a few years in London, my French stubbornness rubbed off and I conceded to tick off ‘White others’ instead of ‘Would rather not answer’ on the ethnic form.

had come in hope of social ascension and did not find it experienced the same sense of immobility as those who had remained behind.

For Chinese migrants with poor economic resources, the reality of migrant life in the UK shares some strong parallels with casino gambling, and even more so than with financial speculation. In Chu's ethnography, which is taking place at the cusp of departure, migration is a project that has not been put into action yet. In that respect, it still looks fairly close to financial speculation.

'The hedging in hedge funds was not altogether different from the gamble made by Fuzhounese in 'gambling their own bodies' on smuggling ventures overseas. At heart, both the financial high-roller as well as the humble stowaway hoped to grasp the elusive signs of the times in order to bet on futures that would flow in their favor.' (2004: 410).

Once in the UK, though, the 'elusive signs of the times' turn into more certain roads where migrants with poor economic resources are condemned to disappointment. Their chances are equal to casino gamblers who probabilistically lose in the long run. Also, similar to gamblers who are aware that 'the house always win', they are rarely under any misapprehensions regarding the harrowing conditions that they have to face once in the 'sumptuous West' (Chu 2004). Despite this, gamblers still fervently engage in gambling and migrants still yearn to go away. For better off Chinese migrants, however, immobility is not as much an issue in their lives. They do not share the same feeling of being stuck since they experience far better opportunities in life. However, this does not make them sheltered from the whimsical moves of fate. In that respect, gambling for them is still more akin to financial speculation.

Chu's call for a less restrictive view of the migrant as a rational actor weighing risks and rewards in order to better articulate the desire to migrate echoes my own concerns about narrow understandings of gambling. In Chapter 3, I demonstrated that gamblers' behaviour was too much confined to the calculative logic that their actions were subordinated to the reaching of an end point: winning. My data illustrates that gamblers' actions are not passively following a common and unique unfolding of time towards a singular idea of reward. On the contrary, each gambler creates his own rhythm in the unique succession of wins and losses that he experiences. This ability to take risks in the present shapes gamblers' personhood and demonstrates it is more pertinent to speak of 'rhythms' in the plural. In light of this, the deterministic and unequal picture of social

mobility among Chinese migrants in London needs to be rethought. In echo to Chu's (2004) ethnography in China where Fujianese migrants-to-be at home still 'lived' mobility without geographical displacement, stagnation of future hopes in the present at the other end of the migratory journey, in London, does not mean movement cannot be experienced. Experiences of time and space are interdependent, multiple and individually distinctive. Movement is not limited to a permanent orientation and gradual progression towards the future as the narrative of success promotes (though it may be recalled in this way retrospectively); it takes place in an untrammelled variety of rhythms and directions through the unique experience of one's bodily actions in different locations. Depending on individuals' economic and social circumstances, gambling is not just a way to deal with uncertainty (Malaby 2003) it also a way to deal with certainty, the knowledge of poor or inexistent prospects or life circumstances that cannot be changed. As such, along with migration and doing business, gambling is one way to experience movement when movement is uncertain or denied.

By consequence, (dis)engagement with gambling emerges more clearly within the specific rhythm of a life story. Through life fluctuations, it appears more evident how gambling and an experience of migration knit together providing a grid through which individuals might escape and also perpetuate ideas and stories of success. In Chapter 4, I look at how individuals re-assessed dreams of getting rich over time in order to maintain a coherent identity despite fickle life fluctuations. Some individuals, like Yuan Ting, manage to turn failures into successes and re-direct their life into a more achievable goal. However as I explore further in Chapters 6 and 7, this process is made harder and individuals become bitterer with age as the potential for improvement gradually receded. With more possibilities ahead of them, my younger interlocutors tend to articulate hopeful discourses. Chapter 6 also brings an interesting contrast to the apparent fixed allure of social mobility among Chinese migrants in London. Beyond social and economic differences and the obvious inequalities of chance that are attached to them, nobody is fully sheltered from unpredictable turns of fate. To be lucky is to be mobile, but luck can never be held indefinitely. In the casino, the capricious nature of luck is momentarily tamed by being confined in a place where multiple opportunities for being lucky are produced incessantly and artificially offering a constant platform for the construction of personhood. At least and at last, respites from uncertainty's whimsical moves, the lack of prospects and an unsatisfactory fate can be enjoyed

through the known risks of a highly controlled place. Ironically, this repetitive enjoyment of luck is made possible in the casino by playing more while being aware that winning money becomes even more unlikely in the long run. This means, as described in Chapter 5, that Chinese individuals use the space of the casino in differentiated ways according of the access they have to others spaces and rhythms outside the casino. The need to experience luck is unequally shared and distributed among Chinese people in London.

Resonating with the literature reconciling time and space as two sides of the same coin and emphasising the variety of rhythms attached to them (Laurier 2008, Lefebvre 2004, Thrift & May 2001) and with the ongoing debate between anthropology and economy about economic rationality (Guyer 2000, Löfving et al. 2005), this thesis opens a path towards a wider analytical framework for migration and mobility. In her thoroughly detailed ethnography following sex workers in the mercurial flow of their individual lives, Day uses migration as a ‘metaphor for the life course in sex work, and not simply for those who move from one country to another’ (2009: 223). I believe that this ‘broader view of the ‘migrant’’ (2009: 223) not limited to geographical motion, and thus not presupposing a universal direction, rhythm, speed, destination or rationality, can comprehensively encompass the experience of gambling within the context of an individual’s life. The advantage of such an approach resides in emphasising that movement, both spatial and temporal, can still be created in fixity. This is notable at both ends of the migratory journey. Chu (2004) describes how playing mahjong in a Fujianese village helps migrants-to-be to deal with the present while being stuck in a period of indefinite wait.

‘[The] appeal [for mahjong] came from enabling people to collectively wrangle with the particular vicissitudes of time itself, albeit on a smaller scale; to hone skills in the company of supportive others for coping with the unrelenting speed of circulation, the burdens of stagnation and waiting, the pressures for timely action and the anxieties over a cloudy future in a modern(izing) world of Post-Mao reform’ (2004: 420).

In the UK, gambling in the casino is a continuation of that process but in a different spatial and temporal place than that of a Fujianese peasant in longing for new horizons. Further down the line to the dreams driving their departure, if not already there for a small minority of better off individuals, Chinese migrants in London need to affirm with more strength their agency. As the workings of social inequalities become increasingly

ineluctable, the burdens of the past heavier and as present successes are still endangered by the caprices of uncertainty and future possibilities are lessening with age, the casino offers a contained place for control over one's becoming in an immediately realised present. This is expressed differently for better off individuals who do not experience the same lack of prospect or poor fate, but still need to shape the self in the face of uncertainty, especially when uncertainty has to be dealt on a regular basis in their lives – such as we have seen for Lewis with trading (see Chapter 6). In this respect, my thesis offers a different kind of conclusion to the one offered by Schüll (2005, 2006), that machine gambling is an escape, an 'exit from *time*' (2005: 76). The findings of my research among Chinese casino players show that time when gambling is not suspended but recreated through the gamblers' bodily actions; it is another way to shape the self, along with the way time is made and experienced when doing business or migrating. This means, as I demonstrated in Chapter 6, that the manipulation of space and time in the casino,²⁹⁹ while creating problems with gambling (whether cast as addictions or as the results of culturally distinctive attitudes towards risk) and how to ameliorate them, (2006)³⁰⁰, also creates opportunities to experience movement when this movement is denied or suspended in other aspects of life.

Individualism, money and social change

During individual encounters and academic presentations, I was often probed on who were those Chinese people who gambled, what were their core characteristics, what were their specific understanding of luck and so on. It seems that people wanted to have their idea of Chineseness confirmed by my research. Beyond my cautious reluctance in explaining Chinese behaviour under the label of 'community' and 'Chinese culture', data made such generalisations difficult, if not impossible. Chinese casino players are not only from various places of origins, ages, social classes, education levels, they also

299 It is to be noted that although the Gambling Act 2005 liberalized gambling, the UK casino market has not achieved the maturity or reach that Schüll observed in Las Vegas. It remains a somewhat niche activity, eclipsed by participation in the National Lottery and betting, as prevalence study figures illustrate (see Chapter 5).

300 Schüll interestingly shows that technologies of consumption in gambling are interlinked with technologies of self-care. 'Although the objectives of each industry's products are seemingly at odds – gambling machines work to encourage play, addiction therapeutics to stop it – both gear their interventions around a model of the self as an ever-changing configuration of behavioral potentials responsive to external modulation.' (2006: 227)

speak different dialects and languages, share different historical belongings to Chinese culture, have experienced different migratory routes, enjoy or endure very unequal socio-economic situations, legal status and working environments in London. Chapter 2 describes in detail the increasing diversity of individuals that one can meet in London under the appellation ‘Chinese’³⁰¹ and how each of those Chinese individuals carries a unique set of events, social connections and circumstances that has shaped who they have become. The experience of geographical displacement into a new social and cultural environment makes it even harder to ignore individuals’ constant movement of becoming that political discourses of Chineseness work to stifle and simplify (to their own advantage). Migration exacerbates individuals’ sense of a stable identity, now put to the test by life in Britain. Confusion and awkwardness also haunt children and grandchildren. In this situation of greater instability Chinese migrants and migrant descendants experience at a variety of different levels, the need to shape and re-shape a sense of self.

Taking further my observations of individuals in the making, in Chapter 7, I explore how Chinese individuals reproduce themselves through their relationships with other people and how this is achieved via the circulation of money in gambling. I demonstrate that this process is far from obvious. The feeling of greed, which was quite strongly expressed by some of the Chinese gamblers I spoke to, a priori insinuated the contrary. After all, gamblers are often assumed by both contributors and theorists to be individualistic and selfish and their desire for money to destroy social cohesion and bounding. This thesis calls for a more nuanced argument supporting Parry and Bloch’s (1989) insight that money not only destroys but also creates both connections and freedom from connections. At the same time, it takes their argument a step further by contributing an analysis of money circulation, individualism and time in a distinctive capitalist context.

What this study of gambling has shown is that both the circulation of money and individualism are equally significant to understand how different kinds of people are shaped under circumstances of social change in migration. The danger is to see forms of

301 Interestingly, some non-Chinese individuals who are for diverse reasons strongly connected to some Chinese networks in London (spouse of a Chinese person, work related with China, learning Mandarin...) could also be considered under this appellation.

individuality and the circulation of money that engender them to be disconnected from social relationships all together. Instead, I argue that individuals develop themselves through a unique web of social relationships they make and unmake over time. As demonstrated by Yan (1996) in the context of a village in North China, these networks developed in the exchange of money can remain fairly contained within a local moral world regulated by 关系 *guanxi* and 认清 *renqing*. In that environment, forms of individualism are more fully rooted and kept within the limits of a recognisable structure, that of the social life of the village and of kinship relationships. My study of gambling among Chinese casino players in London demonstrates that there is a need to extend and develop this model outside an easily observable entity to a more diverse and fragmented social life without assuming that self-interest prevails. This social dynamism reflects both social and economic changes in China and beyond through the impulse of worldwide migration. In these less graspable configurations, gambling is a useful metaphor to explore both individualism and money exchange and as such how individuals redefine their selves in these times of rapid transition. Through an innovative way of representing chaotic and complex gambling behaviours this thesis helps us to think about what is happening to Chinese people at the moment whether they are in China or elsewhere. Gambling in that respect is not just a way to observe what kinds of social exchanges bind individuals with one another but how these connections are re-assessed and changed by the circulation of money, risk-taking and the experience of different temporalities.

The other contribution of this thesis is to show that the relationship between time and money cannot be assumed but must be reconsidered in situ through the way individuals create and experience different temporalities. Time is often portrayed as an instrument for the accumulation of money. This model of economic rationality overlooks the variety of rhythms which can be observed in various settings among different people. The circulation of money in the casino allows for movement to be experienced and time to be made meaningful. As a result, not having enough or any more money to carry on is a real source of anxiety which equates to a feeling of social death. By focusing on the way that money and time are articulated in the casino and the way this articulation takes a particular kind of meaning for Chinese migrants in London, this thesis suggests that more attention needs to be given to the experience of different temporalities when looking at ways of exchanging money. It has shown how Chinese people in London

shape and re-shape their selves forming different temporalities through various ways of exchanging money, and how different ideas of success emerge from risk taking of various kinds including in business, through migration and last, but not least, in the casino. These ideas are placed in the historical context of movements of people and ideas between China and the United Kingdom in order to contribute to wider debates about individualism and also 'Chinese individualism'. The ethnographic focus of this thesis emphasises the idea that the everyday activities of Chinese casino customers can shed light on wider historical processes as well as constituting an important area of research in its own right.

Appendix A

The house 'edge'

Understanding <i>the Odds</i>	
The House "Edge" All percentage figures given are in favour of the House.	
BLACKJACK 4 decks (best technique) (0.85% where the dealer may draw on 'soft' 17)	0.51%
6 decks (best technique) (0.89% where the dealer may draw on 'soft' 17)	0.55%
Royal Match Pay Table 1 Four decks	6.58%
Six decks	5.12%
Pay Table 2 Four decks	8.62%
Six decks	7.32%
<i>If only minimum odds used</i> Four Decks	11.59%
Six Decks	10.29%
Perfect Pairs Pay Table 1 (recommended 4 decks)	6.76%
Pay Table 2 (recommended 6 decks)	5.79%
(Pay Table 1 with 6 decks)	1.93%
(Pay Table 2 with 4 decks)	10.63%
<i>If only minimum odds used</i> Four Decks	11.59%
Six Decks	13.83%
21 + 3 Sidebet Four decks	4.24%
Six decks	3.23%
ROULETTE Even chance bets	1.35%
Bets on the layout	2.70%
Roulette Rage Side bet Pay Table 1	4.61%
Pay Table 2	8.88%
<i>If only minimum odds used</i>	17.00%
PUNTO BANCO If 'Banco' wins	1.06%
If 'Punto' wins	1.24%
If 'Egalite'	14.40%
Punto Banco Dragon Bonus Pay Table 1 Player (6 decks)	2.67%
Banker (6 decks)	9.39%
Player (8 decks)	2.65%
Banker (8 decks)	9.37%
Pay Table 2 Player (6 decks)	2.59%
Banker (6 decks)	8.86%
Player (8 decks)	2.58%
Banker (8 decks)	8.85%
Pay Table 3 Player (6 decks)	2.51%
Banker (6 decks)	8.54%
Player (8 decks)	2.50%
Banker (8 decks)	8.53%
<i>If only minimum odds used</i> Player (6 decks)	11.29%
Banker (6 decks)	16.78%
Player (8 decks)	11.28%
Banker (8 decks)	16.77%
PUNTO 2000 If 'Banco' wins	1.45%
If 'Punto' wins	1.23%
If 'Egalite'	14.40%
THREE CARD POKER On 'Pair Plus' wagers	2.70%
Overall game	2.00%
DICE (CRAPS) Varying from: For Front Line bets:	1.40%
To	
For Hopping Bets:	5.60%
'Any Seven' one roll bets	16.60%

SIC BO

3.80% for odd, even, big, small and one dice bets

Any Triple	13.90%
Specific Triple	16.20%
Specific Double	18.50%

Specific Totals

Varying from:	7.60% (for 9 or 12)
To	15.30% (for 4 or 17)
2 of 3 dice	2.78%
4 number combinations	11.10%
3 single no. combination	13.90%
A Double and a Single number combination	29.20%

BIG SIX

1 Segment symbols	1.93%
2 Segment symbols	19.20%
4 Segment symbols	15.30%
8, 12 & 24 Segment symbols	7.60%

WSOP TEXAS HOLD'EM BONUS POKER**Ante**

(when paid on Straight or better)	2.04%
Per total wager	
(when Ante paid on Straight+)	0.53%

Ante

(when paid on Flush or better)	5.59%
Per total wager	
(when Ante paid on Flush+)	1.47%

Bonus side bet

(without 1000-1 Ace/Ace)	8.90%
Bonus side bet	
(with 1000-1 Ace/Ace)	8.54%

ULTIMATE TEXAS HOLD'EM POKER**Blind**

(Entire games vs. dealer. Assume perfect play)	0.80%
Trips Bonus - Pay Table 1	0.90%
Trips Bonus - Pay Table 2	1.90%
Trips Bonus - Pay Table 3	3.50%
Trips Bonus - Pay Table 4	6.18%
If only minimum odds used	9.12%

CASINO HOLD'EM POKER

Standard Game	2.16%
AA Bonus	6.40%
Progressive 5/7	26.77%

TWO WAY TEXAS HOLD'EM POKER

Standard game per total wager including Two Way wager	1.01%
---	-------

LET IT RIDE

Standard Game	
Pay Table 1	2.66%
Pay Table 2	1.98%
Pay Table 3	2.80%
Pay Table 4	2.86%
If only minimum odds used	5.25%

3 Card Bonus side bet:

Pay Table 1	2.14%
Pay Table 2	5.39%
Pay Table 3	7.10%
If only minimum odds used	18.79%

PAI GOW POKER

Standard game	2.73%*
*(Trump Plaza House Way)	

Jokolor side bet

	3.90%
--	-------

Fortune Pai Gow Poker Side bet

Minimum Odds Pay Table	
Bonus bet	9.94%
Envy bet (to the player)	2.61%

The House "Edge" on the bonus bet will be reduced but not exceeded when incorporating the Envy Bonus. This will vary depending on the number of players eligible for the Envy bonus.

Please note: All the percentage figures are the average expectations but can vary due to customer playing style

Appendix B

Player Rewards welcome letter



The image shows a template for a Player Rewards welcome letter. It features a dark background with a yellow header bar. On the left, there is a yellow box with the 'player rewards' logo. The main text is in white and yellow. On the right, there are two white boxes with '£5' vouchers. At the bottom, there is a red curved banner and a photo of people at a casino table.

player rewards

WELCOME TO OUR WORLD PLAYER REWARDS

Our fantastic loyalty programme that rewards you for your play

Dear [Name]

Welcome to Player Rewards! As a Player Rewards card holder, you earn Reward Points whenever you play slot machines, electronic roulette or table games.

Simply insert your card in the electronic machine or when playing tables show your card to the dealer before you play.

Plus you can earn Reward Points in 10 Player Rewards casinos across the UK so wherever you play your points balance goes with you.

You can spend your Reward Points at any time on club food & drink or branded merchandise - pick up a catalogue in-club.

For more programme information, terms and conditions and to view our merchandise online, please visit www.playerrewardscard.com

We hope you will find that joining Player Rewards is a truly rewarding experience.

The Player Rewards Team

FREE NIGHT ON US

To thank you for joining Player Rewards please accept these vouchers to use on your next visit - valid until 31.04.09

CLICK HERE

GAMING VOUCHER

£5

FREE FOOD AND DRINK

£5

FORWARD TO A FRIEND CLICK HERE

TO UNSUBSCRIBE [CLICK HERE](#)

Know when to stop? Call 0800 529 529
Visit gambleaware.co.uk
or contact gambleaware@nhs.uk



Appendix C

Casinos leaflets in Chinese

Golden Nugget promotional events leaflet, October - December 2007

十二月

即將到來的例行抽獎
十二月一日起的每個午夜

為了慶祝聖誕節的到來，從十二月一日起我們將每天進行抽獎活動，派送精美獎品。只需要將您遊玩賭場時的入場券收集起來，就可以來這裏抽獎。

新年晚會
我們將在Golden Nugget慶祝2008年的到來，並且期待您的加入。盡情享受您最喜歡的樂曲、奇特的裝束，當然還有博彩樓層裡熱鬧的氣氛。我們保證這將是一個難忘之夜！
為增加刺激我們將在凌晨1時舉行一個激動人心的抽獎活動。

免費贈送肉餡餅
在十二月蒞臨的顧客，我們將免費贈送茶和肉餡餅。

玩家獎賞

新的獎賞
來看看所有精美的新獎賞
以下是對玩家獎賞條款的說明。

我們準備了多種多樣的獎品使大家都能分享。當您使用玩老虎機和電子輪盤所賺取的獎賞積分時，所有這些條款都將生效。請確保將您每次參與博彩項目時獲得的積分收集起來。

在金色輪盤中贏取高達£10,000的現金

2007年10月-12月的詳細內容
THIS NEWSLETTER IS AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH FROM RECEIPT "適可而止"
要獲得關於可靠賭博的資訊，請訪問 www.gamblersaware.co.uk。
關於賭博問題的幫助或建議，請聯係Gamcare: 0845 6000 133。

新聞...

新的博彩娛樂時間
從下午2時到早上6時 我們為玩家提供桌面博彩項目。

牌九撲克介紹
我們在此向您介紹一種Golden Nugget新推出的桌面博彩項目。牌九撲克是從一種傳統的亞洲博彩中獲得靈感而衍生出的一種刺激的博彩。玩家需要憑藉技巧和運氣湊出兩手牌並打敗莊家。如果您對此感興趣，請讓一位工作人員帶您到賭台邊觀戰學習。

熱門的改進型老虎機...
玩我們新的Hot Shot & Fort Knox改進型老虎機，並體驗每個玩家都全部下注的刺激。您會是那個幸運的累積賭注的贏家嗎？

十月

金色輪盤抽獎
每天晚上8時、10時和午夜
會員在每次蒞臨賭場時都將獲得一張金色輪盤入場券。一定要在每天四次的抽獎時間蒞臨賭場。贏取高達£10,000的現金。條款和細則將會在俱樂部內更多的詳細資料中看到。

英式炸魚和半品脫啤酒僅需£3
每個週日夜後我們為您提供一次精美的餐廳促銷。
在整個十月，您只花£3就可以享受我們為您提供的美味英式炸魚。

免費贈送三明治
現在Golden Nugget為所有玩桌而博彩項目的玩家免費贈送美味可口的三明治。相關的詳細情況，請向管理層諮詢。

十一月

獎品豐富
每個星期四和星期五晚上6時、8時、午夜12時和凌晨2時。十一月的每個星期四和星期五我們都會舉行四次抽獎。可贏得令人心動的獎賞包括：液晶電視、便攜式攝像機、家庭影院以及更多。請確保抽獎每天獲得3張抽獎入場券。

排燈節晚會
與我們一起慶祝排燈節，開始時間為十一月九日星期五晚上9時。我們用傳統的排燈節裝飾、菜餚和糖果來裝點這個重要的印度節。

2-4-1咖喱餐
在我們供應食物的餐廳，用現做的最上等的咖喱雞或者羔羊來款待您和一位來賓。在十一月的每個週末晚上盡情享受我們的2-4-1饋送活動。

The Empire promotional events, June – August 2007



新張週末

5月31日(星期四) - 6月3日(星期日)

THE CASINO AT THE EMPIRE
精彩娛樂停不了

萬勿錯過率先體驗倫敦市最新的娛樂熱點-The Casino at The Empire! 我們誠邀您於新張週末蒞臨，參與各種精彩的慶祝節目，並在此親身感受拉斯維加斯的璀璨魅力。

精彩內容

5月31日星期四 - 下午5時 - 6時: 免費香檳及小食 - 娛樂場主樓層

晚上8時以後: Pussy Cat Dollz現場表演

晚上7時30分、9時30分、11時: The Casino at The Empire歌舞女郎表演

6月1日星期五 - 下午5時 - 6時: 免費香檳及小食 - 娛樂場主樓層

晚上8時以後: Kevin Fitzsimon演唱法蘭仙納杜拉金曲

晚上7時30分、9時30分、11時: The Casino at The Empire歌舞女郎表演

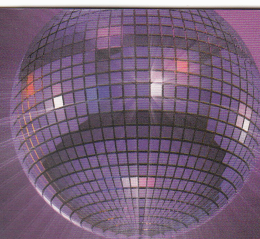
6月2日星期六 - 下午5時 - 6時: 免費香檳及小食 - 娛樂場主樓層

晚上7時30分、9時30分、11時: The Casino at The Empire歌舞女郎表演

6月3日星期日 - 下午5時 - 6時: 免費香檳及小食 - 娛樂場主樓層

晚上8時以後: 中國貓王表演

六月



幸運大抽獎

6月25日、12日、19日及26日逢星期二舉行

會員每次入場均可獲抽獎券一張，並逢星期二晚上11時於atombola抽出一位得獎者。得獎幸運兒將可親手轉動富貴幸運輪，大機會贏取高達£3,500獎賞!

逢星期三現場表演

精彩絕倫的Casino at The Empire歌舞女郎，逢星期四、五及六晚上10時起演出。

6月6日 Legacy現場演出

倫敦最炙手可熱的騷靈及黑人音樂二重唱

6月13日 Most Wanted現場演出

紮實強勁的電子組合

6月20日 Lee Pashley現場演出

Robbie Williams 衷心致敬的殿堂級歌手

6月27日 Andrea Baker現場演出

著名爵士及騷靈歌手

會員活動

6月7日 賭城魅力之夜

The Casino at the Empire誠意獻上the Rat Pack及歌舞女郎的精彩演出，帶您投入拉斯維加斯的華麗繽紛與璀璨魅力。

贏取拉斯維加斯之旅

於6月4日至7日期間，每次您蒞臨The Casino at the Empire，均可參加大抽獎，有機會贏取雙人美國之旅及凱撒皇宮大酒店4晚住宿。抽獎將於6月7日晚上11時舉行。須受細則及條款所限制。

七月八月
六月新張

七月

幸運大抽獎

7月3日、10日、17日、24日及31日逢星期二舉行

獎品高達\$3,500！這個7月，富貴幸運輪為您帶來不同的精彩獎賞，萬勿錯過！請緊記於接待處索取及填妥抽獎券。

逢星期三現場表演

精彩絕倫的Casino at The Empire歌舞女郎，逢星期四、五及六晚上10時起演出。

7月4日 Dean Ager現場演出

甸馬田在此為您獻唱動人金曲

7月11日 Natalie Ward現場演出

天才橫溢的女歌手及色士風演奏家

7月18日 Darrell King現場演出

著名女歌手獻唱經典金曲及騷靈樂曲

7月25日 Harry Cambridge現場演出

Luther Vandross衷心致敬的殿堂級藝人

美膳會

7月11日 共慶巴士的節

我們的頂級食府Flame，誠邀會員感受別開生面的美食體驗。屆時，您將可品嚐精心泡制的法國美食及世界級餐酒。此外，更可於餐前參加品酒會，一嚐各種精選餐酒。

欲成為美膳會會員，請電郵至diningclub@thecasinosq.com或親臨我們任何一家餐廳向服務員查詢。

會員活動

7月16日 西班牙魅力之夜

一個充滿時尚火熱的西班牙之夜，會員即使身處南美洲以外，亦可盡情品嚐地道的西班牙小食，並可欣賞活力十足的樂隊演奏拉丁音樂，徹夜大跳salsa熱舞！

八月

幸運大抽獎

8月7日、14日、21日逢星期二舉行，並於8月28日舉行終極大抽獎

把握最後一個月的機會，贏取各種精彩獎賞。我們將會公佈終極幸運兒，最後一次轉動富貴幸運輪，萬勿錯過！

逢星期三現場表演

精彩絕倫的Casino at The Empire歌舞女郎，逢星期四、五及六晚上10時起演出。

8月1日 Jesso Russo現場演出

8月8日 Robert Lamberti現場演出

George Michael衷心致敬的殿堂級藝人

8月15日 Julia Birkenshaw現場演出

8月22日 On the Couch現場演出

為您演繹由70年代至現在的當代金曲

8月27日 Emily Reed現場演出

優秀的流行曲女歌手

美膳會

8月13日 沉醉英倫夏日

會員將可領略華麗的盛宴享受，盡情品嚐由The Casino at The Empires的著名餐廳Flame所精心泡製的豐富夏日美膳。

欲成為美膳會會員，請電郵至diningclub@thecasinosq.com或親臨我們任何一家餐廳向服務員查詢。

會員活動

8月20日 阿拉伯之夜

夢幻般的阿拉伯風情，融會連串精彩娛樂節目，包括弄蛇表演、傳統肚皮舞等，以及享用各式地中海式美食。

實用資料

會籍

本俱樂部只接待會員，會費全免。欲成為會員，您必須向接待人員出示有效的身份證明文件，例如駕駛執照、護照或信用卡（必須附有電子磁帶）。所有會員必須於登記加入時提供其個人照片。除非會員自行要求撤消，或因觸犯本俱樂部規章而被俱樂部管理層取消會籍，或俱樂部搬遷或結業，否則本俱樂部會籍永久有效。

來賓

會員每次最多可攜同6位來賓一同蒞臨。所有來賓必須年滿18歲，並須於進場時出示適用的身份證明文件。如您希望籌辦大型團體蒞臨本俱樂部，歡迎與俱樂部管理層聯絡。

營業時間

博彩娛樂: 逢星期日至五中午12時至早上6時

(中午12時至下午2時僅限於電子博彩娛樂)

博彩娛樂: 逢星期六中午12時至凌晨四時

(中午12時至下午2時僅限於電子博彩娛樂)

Flame: 每日下午5時30分至凌晨1時

FuLuShou: 每日中午12時至凌晨3時

酒吧: 每日中午12時至深夜(部份酒吧之營業時間會稍遲開始)

泊車

Westminster Council - Masterpark London Swiss Centre NCP
Whitcomb Street Wardour Street
0800 243 348 020 7734 1032

會員可享受折扣優惠，詳情請向接待處查詢。

服飾

必須時刻穿牛仔褲、西褲、恤衫及潔淨鞋履。

聯絡資料

5-6 Leicester Square, London, WC2H 7NA
一般查詢: +44 (0) 870 870 7731
電郵: info@thecasinolsq.com
活動查詢: events@thecasinolsq.com
網頁: www.thecasinolsq.com

撲克



每週撲克聯賽

- 8 15

£100 + £10.
無限制持牌/90分鐘
重購+加注

星期六 - 下午2時

£10.00 + £1
初級 無限制持牌/90分鐘
重購+加注

星期六 - 晚上8時15分

£50. + £5
無限制持牌/90分鐘
重購+加注

星期日 - 下午2時

£10.00 + £1
初級 無限制持牌/90分鐘
重購+加注

星期日 - 晚上8時15分

£30 + £3
無限制持牌/90分鐘
重購+加注



世界撲克大賽於The Casino at The Empire舉行

如欲與世界頂尖高手同場較量，請向我們的接待人員查詢。

玩家獎賞

The Casino at The Empire 玩家獎賞計劃，讓您每次玩耍電子遊戲時，都有激動人心的機會賺取積分。您只需於開始玩耍前把會員卡插入遊戲機內，便可根據消費額累積獎賞積分。

您可以積分於博彩樓層的 player rewards 櫃檯換取各種美食、飲品及紀念品。有關詳情，請向我們的接待人員查詢。

雙倍獎賞積分 - 新張週末呈獻

新張週末期間，您將可獲享“雙倍老虎機”推廣活動獎賞。您只需於5月31日(星期四)至6月3日(星期日)逢中午12時至下午3時期間，把會員卡插入The Casino at The Empire 的角子老虎機內，即可賺取雙倍積分。

博彩娛樂

輪盤 - 單一號碼	最低注碼\$1	最高注碼\$200
廿一點	最低注碼\$5	最高注碼\$1,000
3張牌撲克	最低注碼\$5	最高注碼\$500
百家樂	最低注碼\$5	最高注碼\$5,000
輕觸式輪盤	最低注碼\$0.01	最高注碼\$100
電動輪盤	最低注碼\$1	最高注碼\$200
53款博彩機	由\$500 至 \$4,000	
德州撲克	每星期3天	注碼由\$10起

拉斯維加斯
風采進駐
倫敦市中心

THE CASINO
AT THE
EMPIRE

Appendix D

Gaming machine categories

Gaming machines fall into categories depending on the maximum stake and prize available:

Machine category	Maximum stake (from June 2009)	Maximum prize (from June 2009)
A	Unlimited	Unlimited
B1	£2	£4,000
B2	£100 (in multiples of £10)	£500
B3	£1	£500
B3A	£1	£500
B4	£1	£250
C	£1	£70
D non-money prize (other than crane grab machine)	30p	£8
D non-money prize (crane grab machine)	£1	£50
D money prize	10p	£5
D combined money and non-money prize (other than coin pusher or penny falls machines)	10p	£8 (of which no more than £5 may be a money prize)
D combined money and non-money prize (coin pusher or penny falls machine)	10p	£15 (of which no more than £8 may be a money prize)

(Source: Gambling Commission,
[www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/gambling_sectors/casinos/holding_a_licence_what_you_ne/
key_information_for_the_casino/gaming_machines_casino_premise.aspx](http://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/gambling_sectors/casinos/holding_a_licence_what_you_ne/key_information_for_the_casino/gaming_machines_casino_premise.aspx))

Appendix E

Punto Banco tables of play

PUNTO BANCO

Tables of Play

Note: There are no optional Draws. Both Player and Banker must draw according to these tables after the initial deal i.e. two cards each

PLAYER

HAVING	
1,2,3,4,5,10	DRAWS A CARD UNLESS BANK HAS TOTAL OF 8 OR 9
6-7	STANDS
8-9	STANDS - NO FURTHER CARDS TO BANK

ÉGALITÉ PAYS 8 TO 1

BANKER HAVING 1,2,10 - DRAWS

HAVING	DRAWS WHEN GIVING PLAYER THIRD CARD VALUE	DOES NOT DRAW WHEN GIVING PLAYER THIRD CARD VALUE
3	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,9,10	8
4	2,3,4,5,6,7	1,8,9,10
5	4,5,6,7	1,2,3,8,9,10
6	6,7	1,2,3,4,5,8,9,10
7	STANDS	
8,9	STANDS - NO FURTHER CARDS TO PLAYER	

When Player has 6 or 7 on initial deal, Banker must stand having 6 and must draw when having 0 - 5

PICTURES & TENS COUNT 0

Bibliography

- Abbott, Max, Maria Bellringer, and Lana Perese. 2005. Literature review to inform social marketing objectives and approaches, and behaviour change indicators, to prevent and minimise gambling harm. Auckland: Gambling Research Centre, Auckland University of Technology.
- Abu-Lughod, Lila. 1991. Writing against culture. In *Recapturing anthropology: working in the present*, edited by R. G. Fox. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press.
- Adam, Barbara. 1995. *Timewatch: the social analysis of time*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Akin, David, and Joel Robbins, eds. 1999. *Money and Modernity: State and Local Currencies in Melanesia*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Alleyne, Brian. 2002. An idea of community and its discontent: towards a more reflexive sense of belonging in multicultural Britain. *Ethnic and racial studies* 25 (4):607-627.
- Altman, Jon C. 1985. Gambling as a Mode of Redistribution and Accumulating Cash among Aborigines: A Case Study from Arnhem Land. In *Gambling in Australia*, edited by G. Caldwell, D. Mark, B. Haig and L. Sylvan. Sydney: Croom and Helm.
- Amit, Vered. 2000. Introduction. In *Constructing the Field*. London: Routledge, 1-18.
- , ed. 2002. *Realizing community: concepts, social relationships and sentiments*. London: Routledge.
- Amit, Vered, and Nigel Rapport. 2002. *The trouble with community: anthropological reflections on movement, identity and collectivity*. London: Pluton Press.
- Anderson, Benedict 1991. *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Anderson, Kay J. 1987. The idea of Chinatown: the power of place and institutional practice in the making of a racial. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 77 (4):580-598.
- André, Nathalie. 2009. I Am Not a Lucky Person: An Examination of the Dimensionality of Beliefs About Chance. *Journal of Gambling Studies* 25 (4):473-487.
- Ang, Ien. 2001. Undoing diaspora. Questioning global Chineseness in the era of globalisation. In *On not speaking Chinese: Living between Asia and the West*, London and New York: Routledge, 75-93.
- Appadurai, Arjun. 1986. *The social life of things*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Aquinas, St Thomas. 1922. *Summa Theologica*. Vol. Part 2 (Second Part), QQ. CI-CXL. London: Burns Oates & Washbourne.
- Arthur, David, Wai Leng Tong, Chia Pei Chen, Ai Yun Hing, Miهارu Sagara-Rosemeyer, Ee Heok Kua, and Jeanette Ignacio. 2008. The Validity and Reliability of Four Measures of Gambling Behaviour in a Sample of Singapore University Students. *Journal of Gambling studies* 24 (4):451-462.

- Back, Les. 1996. *New ethnicities and urban culture: racisms and multi-culture in young lives*. London: University College London Press.
- Bailey, Peter. 1987 [1978]. *Leisure and class in Victorian England: rational recreation and the contest for control, 1830-1885*. London: Methuen & Co.
- Baker, Hugh D.R. 1994. Branches all over: the Hong Kong Chinese in the United Kingdom. In *Reluctant exiles? Migration from Hong Kong and the new overseas Chinese*, edited by R. Skeldon. New York: M.E. Sharpe, 291-307.
- Balot, Ryan Krieger. 2001. *Greed and injustice in Classical Athens*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Barbalet, Jack M. 1999. Boredom and Social Meaning. *British Journal of Sociology* 50 (4):631-646.
- Barth, Fredrik. 1963. Introduction. In *The role of the entrepreneur in social change in northern Norway*, edited by F. Barth. Oslo: Univervistetsforlaget.
- Basch, Linda, Nina Glick Schiller, and Christina Szanton Blanc. 1994. *Nations unbound: Transnational projects, post-colonial predicaments and deterritorialized Nation-State*. Basel, Switzerland: Gordon and Breach Publishers.
- Baudrillard, Jean. 1998 [1970]. *The consumer society: myths and structures*. Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Baumann, Gerd. 1995. Managing a Polyethnic Milieu: Kinship and Interaction in a London Suburb. *Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute (N.S)* 1 (4):725-741.
- . 1996. *Contesting culture: Discourses of identity in multi-ethnic London*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Baxter, Sue, and Geoff Raw. 1988. Fast food, fettered work: Chinese women in the ethnic catering industry. In *Enterprising women: ethnicity, economy and gender relations*, edited by S. Westwood and P. Bhachu. London: Routledge, 58-75.
- Beck, Sean. 2007. Meeting on the margins: Cantonese 'Old-timers' and Fujianese 'Newcomers'. *Population, Space and Place* 13 (2):141-152.
- Belshaw, Cyril. 1965. *Traditional exchange and modern markets*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Bender, John B., and David E. Wellberry, eds. 1991. *Chronotypes: the construction of time*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Benhsain, Karin, Alain Taillefer, and Robert Ladouceur. 2004. Awareness of independence of events and erroneous perceptions while gambling. *Addictive behaviors* 29 (2):399-404.
- Benjamin, Walter. 2006 [1930]. 'Notes on a Theory of Gambling'. In *The Sociology of Risk and Gambling Reader*, edited by J. Cosgrave. London: Routledge, 211-214.
- Benton, George. 2003. Chinese transnationalism in Britain: a longer history. *Identities: Global Studies in Power and Culture* 10 (3):347-375.
- Benton, Gregor, and Terence Gomez. 2008. *The Chinese in Britain, 1800-Present: Economy, Transnationalism, and Identity*. Hampshire (UK) and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Berger, John. 1975. *A seventh man*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Bergler, Edmund. 1957. *The psychology of gambling*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Blaszczynski, Alex, S. Huynh, V.J. Dumlao, and Eimear Farrell. 1998. Problem gambling within a Chinese speaking community. *Journal of gambling studies* 14 (4):359-380.
- Blaszczynski, Alex, Neil McConaghy, and Anna Frankova. 1990. Boredom proneness in pathological gambling. *Psychological Reports* 67 (1):35-42.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1977 [1972]. *Outline of a theory of practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1994. *Raisons pratiques. Sur la théorie de l'action*. Paris: Editions du Seuil.
- Bourmeau, Sylvain. 5 May 2009. *Le travail créateur*. Paris: Radio France.
- Boyle, David. 2002. Introduction the failure of money. In *The Money Changers: Currency Reforms from Aristotle to E-cash*, edited by D. Boyle. London: Earthscan Publications, 1-12.
- Brissett, Dennis, and Robert P. Snow. 1993. Boredom: Where the future isn't. *Symbolic Interaction* 16 (3):237-256.
- Burns, Tom. 1973. Leisure in industrial society. In *Leisure and society in Britain*, edited by M. A. Smith, S. Parker and C. S. Smith. London: Allen Lane, 40-55.
- Buyandelgeriyn, Manduhai. 2007. Dealing with uncertainty: shamans, marginal capitalism and the remaking of history in post-socialist Mongolia. *American Ethnologist* 34 (1):127-147.
- Caillois, Roger. 1967 [1958]. *Les jeux et les hommes: le masque et le vertige*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Campbell, Colin. 2005 [1987]. *The romantic ethic and the spirit of modern consumerism*. Oxford: Blackwell Publisher.
- Camus, Albert. 1942. *Le mythe de Sisyphe. Essai sur l'absurde*. Paris: Editions Gallimard.
- Candea, Matei. 2007. Arbitrary locations: in defence of the bounded field-site. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (N.S) (13):167-184.
- Caputo, Virginia. 2000. At 'home' and 'away': reconfiguring the field for late twentieth-century anthropology. In *Constructing the field*, edited by V. Amit. London: Routledge, 19-31.
- Carrier, James. 1990. The symbolism of possession in commodity advertising. *Man* (N.S.) 25 (4):693-706.
- Carsten, Janet. 1989. Cooking money: gender and the symbolic transformation of means of exchange in a Malay fishing community, edited by J. Parry and M. Bloch. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 117-141.
- Cass, Jeffrey. 2004. Egypt on steroids: Luxor Las Vegas and postmodern orientalism. In *Architecture and tourism: perception, performance, and place*, edited by M. Lasansky and B. McLaren. Oxford, New York: Berg, 241-264.

- Cassidy, Rebecca. 2009. 'Casino capitalism' and the financial crisis. *Anthropology Today* 25 (4):10-13.
- . 2010. Gambling as exchange: horserace betting in London. *International Gambling Studies* 10 (2):139-149.
- . forthcoming. Horse versus machine: battles in the betting shop.
- Cattelino, Jessica. 2008. *High stakes: Florida Seminole gaming and sovereignty*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Chan, Chak Kwan. 2005. The study of help-seeking behaviours among UK Chinese families. ESRC research paper.
- Chan, Chak Kwan, Bankole Cole, and Graham Bowpitt. 2007. Welfare State without dependency: the case of the UK Chinese people. *Social Policy and Society* 6 (4):503-514.
- Chen, Anna. 2nd May 2007. From ship to shore. *The Chinese in Britain*. London: BBC Radio 4.
- . 30 April 2007. The first Chinese VIPs. *The Chinese in Britain*. London: BBC Radio 4.
- Chinn, Carl. 1991. *Better betting with a decent feller: bookmakers, betting and the British working class 1750-1990*. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Chiu, Chi-yue, and Ying-yi Hong. 1988. Sex, locus of control, and illusion of control in Hong Kong as correlates of gambling involvement. *Journal of Social Psychology* 128:667-673.
- Christiansen, Flemming. 2003. *Chinatown, Europe. An exploration of overseas Chinese identity in the 1990s*. London: Routledge Curzon.
- Chu, Julie Yu. 2004. Cosmologies of credit: Fuzhounese migration and the production of value, Anthropology, unpublished thesis, New York University.
- . 2006. To be "emplaced": Fuzhounese migration and the politics of destination. *Identities-Global Studies in Culture and Power* 13 (3):395-425.
- . 2007. Equation fixations: on the whole and the sum of dollars in foreign exchange. In *Money: ethnographic encounters*, edited by S. Senders and A. Truitt. Oxford, New York: Berg, 15-25.
- Chui, Chi Fai, Raymond. 2003. Globalization, neo-liberalism and immigration of Chinese to New Zealand. Conference paper. Knowledge, Capitalism, Critique. Auckland University of Technology, Auckland.
- Churchill, Caryl. 1990 [1984]. *Serious money*. London: Methuen.
- Clapson, Mark. *A bit of a flutter: popular gambling and English society 1823-1961*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Clegg, Jenny. 1994. *Fu Manchu and the 'Yellow Peril': the making of a racist myth*. Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books Limited.
- Clifford, James. 1988. *The predicament of culture: twentieth-century ethnography, literature, and art*. London: Harvard University Press.
- Cohen, Anthony. 1985. *The symbolic construction of community*. London: Routledge.

- . 2002. Epilogue. In *Reconceptualizing community: concepts, social relationships and sentiments*, edited by V. Amit. London: Routledge, 165-170.
- Coleman, Simon, and Peter Jeffrey Collins, eds. 2006. *Locating the field: space, place and context in anthropology*. Oxford: Berg.
- Collins, Alan F. 1996. The pathological gambler and the government of gambling. *History of Human Sciences* 9 (3):69-100.
- Comaroff, Jean, and John L. Comaroff. 2005 [2000]. Millennial Capitalism and the Culture of Neoliberalism. In *The anthropology of development and globalisation: from classical political economy to contemporary neo-liberalism*, edited by M. Edelman and A. Haugerud. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 177-187.
- Conrad, Peter. 1997. It's Boring: Notes on the Meaning of Boredom in Everyday Life. *Qualitative Sociology* 20 (4):465-475.
- Cosgrave, Jim, ed. 2006. *The sociology of risk and gambling reader*. London: Routledge.
- Cosgrave, Jim, and Thomas R. Klassen. 2001. Gambling against the state: The state and the legitimization of gambling. *Current Sociology* 49 (5):1-15.
- Cowley, Catherine. 23 May 2010. *The Greed Imperative*. London: BBC Radio 4.
- Crang, Mike. 2001. Rhythms of the city: temporalised space and motion. In *TimeSpace: geographies of temporalities*, edited by N. Thrift and J. May. London, New York: Routledge, 187-207.
- Crawford, Margaret. 2000 [1992]. The world in a shopping mall. In *The city cultures reader*, edited by M. Miles, T. Hall and I. Borden. London: Routledge, 125-140.
- Crossley, Pamela Kay, Helen F Siu and Donald S. Sutton. 2006. *Empire at the margins: culture, ethnicity, and frontier in early modern China*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Crump, Thomas. 1990. *The anthropology of numbers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 1992. *The Japanese numbers game. The use and understanding of numbers in modern Japan*. London: Routledge.
- Daniels, Inge Maria. 2003. Scooping, raking, beckoning luck: luck, agency and the interdependence of people and things in Japan. *Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute (N.S)* 9:619-638.
- Day, Sophie. 2007. *On the game: women and sex work*. London: Pluto.
- De Coppet, Daniel. 1979. 1, 4, 8; 9, 7 La monnaie: présence des morts et mesure du temps. *L'Homme* 10 (1):17-39.
- De Goede, Marieke. 2004. Repoliticising financial risk. *Economy and Society* 33 (2):197-217.
- . 2005. *Virtue, fortune and faith: a genealogy of finance*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- De Pina-Cabral, João. 2002. In *Between China and Europe: person, culture and emotion in Macao*. London: Continuum.

- Delfabbro, Paul. 2004. The stubborn logic of regular gamblers: obstacles and dilemmas in cognitive gambling research. *Journal of Gambling Studies* 20 (1):1-21.
- Delfabbro, Paul, and Anthony H. Winefield. 2000. Predictors of irrational thinking in regular slot machine gamblers. *The journal of psychology* 134 (2):117-28.
- Delman, Jørgen, and Xiaoqing Yin. 2008. Individualisation and politics in China: the political identity and agency of private business. *European Journal of East Asian Studies* 7 (1):39-73.
- Dikötter, Frank. 1992. *The discourse of race in modern China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Dixey, Rachael. 1987. It's a great feeling when you win: women and bingo. *Leisure Studies* 6 (2):199 - 214.
- Dixon, Laura, Richard Trigg, and Mark Griffiths. 2007. An empirical investigation of music and gambling behaviour. *International Gambling Studies* 7 (3):315-326.
- Downes, David M., B.P. Davies, M.E. David, and E. Stone. 1976. *Gambling, work and leisure: a study across three areas*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Dwyer, Peter D., and Monica Minnegal. 2006. The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: Risk, Uncertainty and Decision-Making by Victorian Fishers. *Journal of Political Ecology* 13:1-23.
- Eadington, William R. 1999. The economics of casino gambling. *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 13 (3):173-192.
- Empson, Rebecca. forthcoming. Accumulating and Dispersing Fortune among Buriad Households in Northeast Mongolia, In *Fortune Societies*, edited by C. Humphrey and G. da Col.
- Fabian, Ann Vincent. 1999 [1990]. *Card sharps and bucket shops: gambling in nineteenth-century America*. New York, London: Routledge.
- Fabian, Johannes. 1983. *Time and the other: how anthropology makes its object*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Farquhar, Judith. 1996. Market magic: getting rich and getting personal in medicine after Mao. *American Ethnologist* 23 (2):237-257.
- Favret-Saada, Jeanne. 1977. *Les mots, la mort, les sorts*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Fei, Xiaotong. 1998 [1949]. *Earthbound China. A study of rural economy in Yunnan*. London: Routledge.
- Fenton, James. 1992. Introduction. In *Underground in Japan*, by R. B. Ventura. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, vii-x.
- Fernandez, James. 2003. Emergence and convergence in some African sacred places. In *The anthropology of space and place: locating culture*, edited by S. M. Low and D. Lawrence-Zúñiga. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Festa, Paul. 2007. Mahjong agonistics and the political public in Taiwan: fate, mimesis, and the martial imaginary. *Anthropological quarterly* 80 (1):93-125.
- Feuchtwang, Stephan. 1974. *An anthropological analysis of Chinese geomancy*. Vientiane, Laos: Vithagna.

- . 2001. *Popular religion in China: the imperial metaphor*. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press.
- . 2005. Mythical moments in national and other family histories. *History Workshop Journal* 59 (1):179-193.
- Finlay, Karen, Harvey Marmurek, Vinay Kanetkar, and Jane Londerville. 2007. Trait and state emotion congruence in simulated casinos: Effects on at-risk gambling intention and restoration. *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 27 (2):166-175.
- . 2010. Casino décor effects on gambling emotions and intentions. *Environment and Behaviour* 42 (4):524-545.
- Fong, Vanessa. 2004. *Only hope: Coming of age under China's one-child policy*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- . 2007. Morality, cosmopolitanism, or academic attainment? Discourses on 'quality' and urban Chinese-only-children's claims to ideal personhood. *City & Society* 19 (1):86-113.
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and punish*. New York: Vintage books.
- Freud, Sigmund. 1928. Dostoevsky and parricide. In *Collected papers*, edited by J. Strachey. London: Hogarth, 222-243.
- Friedman, Bill. 2000. *Designing casinos to dominate the competition*. Reno, Nevada: Institute for the Study of Gambling and Commercial Gaming.
- Gamble, Jocelyn. 1997. Stir-fried stocks: share dealers, trading places, and new options in contemporary Shanghai. *Modern China* 23 (2):181-213.
- Gates, Hill. 1987. Money for the Gods. *Modern China* 13 (3):259-277.
- Geertz, Clifford. 1973. Deep play: Notes on the Balinese cockfight. In *The interpretation of cultures*. New York: Basic Books, 412-453.
- Gell, Alfred. 1992. *The anthropology of time: cultural constructions of temporal maps and images*. Oxford: Berg.
- Giacopassi, David, Mark Nichols, and B. Grant Stitt.. 1999. Attitudes of community leader in new casino jurisdictions regarding casino gambling's effects on crime and quality of life. *Journal of Gambling Studies* 15 (2):123-147.
- Gigerenzer, Gerd, Zeno Swijtink, Theodore Porter, Lorraine Daston, John Beatty, and Lorenz Kruger. 1989. *The empire of chance: how probability changed science and everyday life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Godbout, Jacques. 1992. *L'esprit du don*. Paris: Editions La Découverte.
- Godechot, Olivier. 2007. *Working rich: salaires, bonus et appropriation du profit dans l'industrie financière*. Paris: Editions la Découverte.
- Godelier, Maurice. 2010. Communities, societies, cultures: the three keys to understand today's conflicted identities. *Journal of the royal anthropological institute* 16 (1):1-11.
- Goffman, Ervin. 1967. *Where the action is: three essays*. London: Allenlane.
- Goodale, Jane Carter 1987. Gambling is hard work: card playing in Tiwi society. *Oceania* 58 (1):6-21.

- Goody, Jack. 1992. Culture and its boundaries: a European view. *Social Anthropology* 1 (1a):9-32.
- Graeber, David. 1996. Beads and money: notes towards a theory of wealth and power. *American Ethnologist* 23 (1):4-24.
- . 2001. *Toward an anthropological theory of value. The false coin of our own dreams*. New York: Palgrave.
- . 2007. The very idea of consumption: desire, phantasms, and the aesthetics of destruction from medieval time to the present. In *Possibilities: Essays on Hierarchy, Rebellion, and Desire*. Edinburgh: AK Press, 57-84.
- Granovetter, Mark. 1983. The strength of weak ties: a network theory revisited. *Sociological Theory* 1:201-233.
- . 1995. The economic sociology of firms and entrepreneurs: essays on networks, ethnicity and entrepreneurship. In *The economic sociology of immigration*, edited by A. Portes. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 128-165.
- Graves, Robert. 1961 [1955]. *Greek myths*. London: Cassell.
- Gray, John. 1999. Open spaces and dwelling places: being at home on hill farms on the Scottish borders. *American Ethnologist* 26 (2):440-460.
- . 2002. Community as place-making: Ram auctions in the Scottish borderland. In *Realizing community: concepts, social relationships and sentiments*, edited by V. Amit. London: Routledge, 38-59.
- Gregory, Chris A. 1982. *Gifts and commodities*. London: Academic Press.
- Griffiths, Mark. 1991. Psychobiology of the near miss in fruit machine gambling. *Journal of Psychology* 125:347-357.
- . 1993. Fruit machine gambling: the importance of structural characteristics. *Journal of Gambling Studies* 9 (2):101-120.
- . 1994. The role of cognitive bias and skill in fruit machine gambling. *British journal of psychology* 85:351-369.
- Griffiths, Mark, and Jonathan Parke. 2005. The psychology of music in gambling environments: An observational research note. *Journal of Gambling Issues* (13), <http://jgi.camh.net/doi/full/10.4309/jgi.2005.13.8>.
- . 2006. The psychology of the fruit machine: the role of structural characteristics (revisited). *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction* 4 (2):151-179.
- Gudeman, Stephen. 2001. *The anthropology of economy: community, market, and culture*. Oxford: Blackwell Publisher.
- Guiheux, Gilles. 2009. L'entrepreneur, héros socialiste. *Revue Espace Marx* 26:52-56.
- Gupta, Akhil, and James Ferguson. 1992. Beyond 'culture': Space, identity, and the politics of difference. *Cultural Anthropology* 7 (1):6-23.
- . 1997a. *Anthropological Locations*. London: University of California Press.
- . 1997b. Culture, power, place: ethnography at the end of an era. In *Culture, power, place*. Durham, London: Duke University Press, 1-30.

- Guyer, Jane I. 2000. Rationality or Reasoning? Comment on Heath Pearson's 'Homo Economicus Goes Native, 1859–1945'. *History of Political Economy* 32 (4):1011-1015.
- Hacking, Ian. 1990. *The taming of chance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hall, Stuart. 1996. New ethnicities. In *Black British cultural studies: a reader*, edited by H. A. Baker, M. Diawara and R. H. Lindeborg. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 163-172.
- Hansen, Mette Halskov, and Cuiming Pang. 2008. Me and my family: perceptions of individual and collective among young rural Chinese. *European Journal of East Asian Studies* 7 (1):75-99.
- Hansen, Mette Halskov, and Rune Svarverud, eds. 2009. *IChina: The rise of the individual in modern Chinese society*. Copenhagen: NIAS Press.
- Harrell, Stevan. 1985. Why do the Chinese work so hard?: Reflexion on an entrepreneurial ethic. *Modern China* 11 (2):203-226.
- . 1987. The concept of fate in Chinese Folk Ideology. *Modern China* 13 (1):90-109.
- Harris, Olivia. 2007. What makes people work? In *Questions of anthropology*, edited by R. Astuti, J. Parry and C. Stafford. Oxford, New York: Berg, 157-166.
- Hart, Keith. 1975. Swindler or public benefactor? The entrepreneur in his community. In *Changing social structure in Ghana*, edited by J. Goody. London: International African Institute, 1-35.
- . 1986. Heads or Tails? Two sides of the coin. *Man (N.S)* 21 (4):637-56.
- . 2000. *The memory bank: money, machine and the market*. London: Profile.
- . 2007a. Marcel Mauss: in pursuit of the whole. A review essay. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 49 (2):1-13.
- . 2007b. Money is always personal and impersonal. *Anthropology Today* 23 (5):12-16.
- Harvey, David. 1989. *The condition of post-modernity: an enquiry into the origins of cultural change*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- . 2005. *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hastings, James, and John Alexander Selbie. 2003. *Encyclopedia of religion and ethics*. London: Kessinger.
- Hayano, David M. 1982. *Poker faces. The life and work of professional card players*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- . 1989. Like eating money: card gambling in a Papua New Guinea Highlands village. *Journal of Gambling Studies* 5 (3):231-245.
- Healy, Sean Desmond. 1984. *Boredom, Self, and Culture*. Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press.
- Heidegger, Martin. 2008 [1927]. *Being and time*. New York: Harper Perennial/Modern Thought.

- Heintz, Monica. 2005. Time and the work ethic in post-socialist Romania. In *The qualities of time: anthropological approaches*, edited by W. James and D. Mills. Oxford: Berg, 171-184.
- Helgesson, Gert. 2005. Rationality in economy: an interdisciplinary dispute. In *Peopled economies: conversations with Stephen Gudeman*, edited by S. Gudeman and S. Löfving. Gdansk, Poland: Förlags ab Gondolin, 29-62.
- Henderson, Justin. 1999. *Casino design: resorts, hotels, and themed entertainment spaces*. London: Hi Marketing.
- Hertz, Ellen. 1998. *The trading crowd. An ethnography of the Shanghai Stock Market*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hirschman, Albert O. 1977. *The passions and the interests*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Hobsbaw, Eric, and Terence Ranger, eds. 1992. *The invention of tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- House of Commons 1985. Second report, Session 1984-85. Chinese community in Britain. edited by H. A. Committee. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
- . 2009. Thirteenth Report, Session 2008-2009. Managing migration: The points based system, Section 170-192. edited by H. A. Committee. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
- Howell, Signe. 2002. Community beyond place: Adoptive families in Norway. In *Realizing community: concepts, social relationships and sentiments*, edited by V. Amit. London: Routledge, 84-104.
- Howland, Peter. 2001. Toward an ethnography of Lotto. *International Gambling Studies* 1 (1):8-25.
- Hsu, Elisabeth. 2007. Zanzibar and its Chinese communities. *Population, Space and Place* 13:113-124.
- Huizinga, Johan. 1970 [1938]. *Homo ludens: a study of the play element in culture*. London: Paladin.
- Humphrey, Catherine, and Stephen Hugh-Jones, eds. 1992. *Barter, exchange and value: an anthropological approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hébert, Robert F., and Albert N. Link. 1989. In search of the meaning of entrepreneurship. *Small Business Economics* 1 (1):39-49.
- Jeffrey, Craig. 2010. Timepass: Youth, Class, and Time among Unemployed Young Men in India. *American Ethnologist* 37 (3):465-481.
- Jenkins, Timothy. 1994. Fieldwork and the perception of everyday life. *Man (N.S.)* 29 (2):433-455.
- Johansson, Agneta, Jon E Grant, Suck Won Kim, Brian L. Odlaug, and K. Gunnar Götestam. 2009. Risks factors for problematic gambling: a critical literature review. *Journal of Gambling Studies* 25 (1):67-92.
- Johnston, James. 2009. Learning to leave: moral geographies and ethical movements in Anhui. Workshop paper. Ordinary ethics in China today. London School of Economics and Political Science.

- Jones, Douglas 1979. The Chinese in Britain: Origins and Development of a Community. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 7 (3):397-402.
- Joukhador, Jackie, F. Maccallum, and Alex Blaszczyński. 2003. Differences in cognitive distortions between problem and social gamblers. *Psychological reports* 92 (2) 3:1203-14.
- Kalischuk, Ruth Grant, Nadine Nowatzki, Kelly Cardwell, Kurt Klein, and Jason Solowoniuk. 2006. Problem gambling and its impact on families: a literature review. *International Gambling Studies* 6 (1):31-60.
- Kent-Lemon, Nigel. 1984. Significant influences on the United Kingdom casino industry since 1960. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 474:72-79.
- Kern, Stephen. 2003 [1983]. *The culture of time and space, 1880-1918*. Cambridge, MA, London: Harvard University Press.
- Kingma, Sytze. 2004. Gambling and the risk society: the liberalisation crisis of gambling in the Netherlands. *International Gambling Studies* 4 (1):47-67.
- Klapp, Orrin Edgar. 1986. *Overload and Boredom: Essays on the Quality of Life in the Information Society*. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Kleinman, Arthur. 2009. Foreword. In *The Individualisation of Chinese Society*, by Y. Yan. Oxford, New York: Berg, xi-xiv.
- Knight, Frank H. 2006 [1921]. *Risk, uncertainty and profit*. New York: Dover Publications.
- Knorr Cetina, Karin. forthcoming. The market as an object of attachment. In *Maverick Markets: The Cultural Structures of global financial markets*, edited by K. Knorr Cetina. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Kopytoff, Igor. 1994. Leisure, Boredom, and Luxury Consumerism: The Lineage Mode of Consumption in a Central African Society. In *Consumption and Identity*, edited by J. Friedman. Chur, Switzerland: Harwood Academic, 207-231.
- Kranes, David. 1995. Play grounds. *Journal of Gambling Studies* 11 (1):91-102.
- Krige, Detlev. Running for a Living: Notes on Fahfee Runners in Soweto and Johannesburg, unpublished paper.
- Kuper, Adam. 1999. *Culture: the anthropologists' account*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Kwong, Peter, and Dušanka Mišević. 2005. *Chinese America. The untold story of America's oldest new community*. New York: New Press.
- Källmén, Håkan, Patric Andersson, and Anders Andren. 2008. Are irrational beliefs and depressive mood more common among problem gamblers than non-gamblers? A survey study of Swedish problem gamblers and controls. *Journal of Gambling Studies* 24 (4):441-50.
- Lackey, Jennifer. 2008. What luck is not. *Australian Journal of Philosophy* 86 (2):255-267.
- Ladouceur, Robert. 2004. Perceptions among pathological and non-pathological gamblers. *Addictive behaviors* 29 (3):555-565.

- Ladouceur, Robert, Anne Gaboury, Michel Dumont, and P. Rochette. 1988. Gambling: relationship between the frequency of wins and irrational thinking. *The Journal of psychology* 122 (4):409-414.
- Ladouceur, Robert, and Stella Lachance. 2007. *Overcoming your pathological gambling: therapist guide*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ladouceur, Robert, Caroline Sylvain, C. Boutin, Stella Lachance, C. Doucet, and J. Leblond. 2003. Group therapy for pathological gamblers: a cognitive approach. *Behaviour research and therapy* 41 (5):587-596.
- Ladouceur, Robert, Caroline Sylvain, Hélène Letarte, Isabelle Giroux, and Christian Jacques. 1998. Cognitive treatment of pathological gamblers. *Behaviour research and therapy* 36 (12):1111-1119.
- Ladouceur, Robert, and Michael Walker. 1992. *The psychology of gambling*. Elmsford, New York: Pergamon Press, 89-120.
- . 1996. A cognitive perspective on gambling. In *Trends in cognitive and behavioural therapies*, edited by P. M. Salkovskis. New York: Wiley, 89-120.
- Lai, Daniel W.L. 2006. Gambling and the older Chinese in Canada. *Journal of Gambling Studies* 22 (1):121-141.
- Lam, Tom, Rosemary Sales, Alessio D'Angelo, Xia Lin, and Nicola Montagna. 2009. The changing Chinese community in London: New migration, new needs. London: Social Policy Centre, Middlesex University.
- Lange, Phil. 2005. Culture and the gambling phenomenon. *Journal of Gambling Issues* (14), <http://jgi.camh.net/doi/full/10.4309/jgi.2005.14.8>.
- Langer, Ellen J. 1975. Illusion of control. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 32 (2):311-328.
- Lary, Diana. 1999. The 'static' decades: inter-provincial migration in pre-reform China. In *Internal and International Migration: Chinese perspectives*, edited by F. N. Pieke and H. Mallee. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 29-48.
- Lau, Lai-Yin, and Rob Ranyard. 2005. Chinese and English probabilistic thinking and risk taking in gambling. *Journal of cross-cultural psychology* 36 (5):621-627.
- Laurier, Eric. 2008. How breakfast happens in the café. *Time & Society* 17 (1):120-134.
- Lea, Stephen E.G., and Paul Webley. 2006. Money as tool, money as drug: the biological psychology of a strong incentive. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 29 (2):161-209.
- Lears, Jackson. 2003. *Something for nothing: Luck in America*. New York: Penguin.
- Lee, Bonnie K., Jason Solowoniuk, and Mary Fong. 2007. 'I was independent since I was born': pre-immigration traumatic experiences and pathological gambling in four Chinese Canadians. *International Journal of Migration, Health and Social Care* 3 (2):33-50.
- Lee, James, and Cameron Campbell. 1997. *Fate and Fortune in rural China: social organisation and population behavior in Liaoning in 1774-1873*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lefebvre, Henri. 2002 [1968]. *Everyday life in the modern world*. London: Continuum.

- . 2004 [1992]. *Rhythmanalysis: space, time and everyday life*. London: Continuum.
- Lem, Winnie. 2008. Migrants, mobilization, and the making of neo-liberal citizens in contemporary France. *Focaal - European Journal of Anthropology* 51:57-72.
- Lesieur, Henry R., and Robert L. Custer. 1984. Pathological gambling: roots, phases, treatments. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 474:146-156.
- Levi-Strauss, Claude. 1992 [1964]. *The raw and the cooked*. London: Penguin Books.
- Leyshon, Andrew, and Nigel Thrift. 1997. *Money/Space. Geographies of monetary transformation*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Li, Minghuan. 1999. 'To get rich quickly in Europe!' – Reflections on migration motivations in Wenzhou. In *Internal and International migration*, edited by P. Frank and H. Mallee. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 181-198.
- . 2002. A group in transition: Chinese students and scholars in the Netherlands. In *Globalising Chinese migration: trends in Europe and Asia (Research in Migration and Ethnic Relations)*, edited by Pál Nyíri and Igor' Rostislavovich Savel'ev. Aldershot: Ashgate Pub Ltd, 173-188.
- Liao, Debbie, and Philip Sohmen. 2001. The development of modern entrepreneurship in China. *Stanford Journal of East Asian Affairs* 1:27-33.
- Lim, Linda Y.C. 1983. Chinese economic activity in Southeast Asia: an introductory review. In *The Chinese in Southeast Asia*, edited by L. Y. C. Lim and L. A. P. Gosling. Singapore: Maruzen, 1-29.
- Lin Wong, Maria. 1989. *Chinese Liverpudlians: a history of the Chinese community*. Liverpool, Birkenhead: Liver Press.
- Liu, Hong. 2005. New migrants and the revival of overseas Chinese nationalism. *Journal of Contemporary China* 14 (43):291-316.
- Liu, Xin. 1997. Space, mobility, and flexibility: Chinese villagers and scholars negotiate power at home and abroad. In *Flexible citizenship: the cultural logics of transnationality*, edited by A. Ong and D. Nonini. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 91-113.
- . 2009. *The mirage of China: anti-humanism, narcissism, and corporeality of the contemporary world*. New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Loo, Jasmine M.Y., Namrata Raylu, and Tian Po. S. Oei. 2008. Gambling among the Chinese: a comprehensive review. *Clinical Psychology Review* 28 (7):1152-1166.
- Loussouarn, Claire. 2001. Cuisine et alimentation des Chinois du Vietnam: affirmer sa sinitude en pays sinisé, unpublished M.A. dissertation. Aix-en-Provence: Université de Provence.
- Low, Setha M., and Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga, eds 2006. *The anthropology of space and place*, Oxford: Blackwell publishing.
- Luk, Wai-ki E. 2009. Chinese ethnic settlements in Britain: spatial meanings of an orderly distribution, 1981-2001. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 35 (4):575-599.

- Löfving, Staffan, ed. *Peopled economies: conversations with Stephen Gudeman*. Gdansk, Poland: Förlags ab Gondolin.
- Mackie, J.A.C. 1992. Overseas Chinese entrepreneurship. *Asian Pacific Economic Literature* 6 (1):41-64.
- Maclean, N. 1984. Is gambling 'Bisnis'? the economic and political functions of gambling in the Jimi Valley. *Social Analysis* 16:44-59.
- Maclure, Richard, J. David Smith, S.L. Wood, Raymond Leblanc, J. Li, and A.M. Cuffaro 2006. Entertainment or imprudence? An ethnography of female Bingo players. In *The sociology of risk and gambling reader*, edited by J. Cosgrave. London: Routledge, 163-184.
- MacRae, Donald Gunn. 1980. From villain to hero? In *The prime movers of progress: The entrepreneur in capitalism and socialism*, edited by I. Kirzner. London: Institute of Economic Affairs, 115-128.
- Mains, Daniel. 2007. Neoliberal times: progress, boredom, and shame among young men in urban Ethiopia. *American Ethnologist* 34 (4):659-673.
- Malaby, Thomas. 2003. *Gambling life. Dealing in contingency in a Greek city*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
- Mallarmé, Stéphane. *Oeuvres complètes*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Mann, Katherine. 2003. 'Sit anywhere you like, we're all friends together': reflections on bingo culture. Goldsmith Anthropology research paper.
- March, A. 1974. *The idea of China: myth and theory in geographic thought*. New York: Praeger.
- Marmurek, Harvey, Karen Finlay, Vinay Kanetkar, and Jane Londerville. 2007. The influence of music on estimates of at-risk gambling intentions: an analysis by casino design. *International Gambling Studies* 7 (1):113-122.
- Martinez, Frédéric, Jean-François Bonnefon, and Julie Hoskens. 2009. Active involvement, not illusory control, increases risk taking in a gambling game. *The Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology* 62 (6):1063-1071.
- Matilainen, Ritta. 2009. A question of money? The founding of two Finnish gambling monopolies. In *Global gambling: Cultural perspectives on gambling organizations*, edited by S. Kingma. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 21-37.
- Maurer, William. 2006. The anthropology of money. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 35:15-36.
- Mauss, Marcel. 1925. Essai sur le don. Forme et raisons de l'échange dans les sociétés archaïques. *Années Sociologiques* (N.S.) 1:30-186.
- McGowan, Virginia. 2004. 'How do we know what we know?' Epistemic tensions in social and cultural research on gambling 1980-2000. *Journal of Gambling issues* (11).
- McGowan, Virginia, Judith Droessler, Gary Nixon, and Misty Grimshaw. 2000. Recent research in the socio-cultural domain of gaming and gambling: an annotated bibliography and critical review. Edmonton, AB: Alberta Gaming Research Institute.

- McMillen, Jan. 1996. Introduction. In *Gambling cultures. Studies in history and interpretation*, edited by J. McMillen. London: Routledge.
- Menger, Pierre-Michel. 2009. *Le travail créateur: s'accomplir dans l'incertain*. Paris: Gallimard/Seuil.
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. 2002 [1945]. *Phenemology of perception*. London: Routledge.
- Miers, David. 2002. 'OFGAM?, OFBET?' The regulation of commercial gambling as a leisure industry. *Entertainment Law* 1 (1):20-51.
- . 2004. *Regulating commercial gambling. Past, present and future*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 2006. Implementing Great Britain's Gambling Act 2005: The Gambling Commission and the Casino Question. *Gaming Law Review* 10 (5):472-485.
- . 2007. Another U-turn: Great Britain's casino questions and other gambling issues. *Gaming Law Review* 11 (6):699-713.
- Millar, Jeremy, and Claire Doherty. 2000. *Jane and Louise Wilson*. London: Ellipsis.
- Miller, Daniel. 2008. *The comfort of things*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Miller, Daniel, Peter Jackson, Nigel Thrift, Beverley Holbrook, and Michael Rowlands. 1998. *Shopping, place and identity*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Miller, Nathalie V., and Shawn R. Currie. 2008. A Canadian population level analysis of the roles of irrational gambling cognitions and risky gambling practices as correlates of gambling intensity and pathological gambling. *Journal of Gambling Studies* 24 (3):257-74.
- Mines, Mattison. 1988. Conceptualising the person: hierarchical society and individual autonomy in India'. *American Anthropologist, New Series* 90 (3):568-579.
- Miranda, Joseph. 2002. *Against the romance of community*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Mises, Ludwig Von. 1949. *Human action: a treatrise on economics*. London: Hodge.
- Mitchell, William E. 1988. The defeat of hierarchy: gambling as exchange in a Sepik society. *American ethnologist* 15:638-657.
- Monaghan, Sally, Alex Blaszczyński, and Lia Nower. 2009. Consequences of winning: the role of gambling outcomes in the development of irrational beliefs. *Behavioral cognitive psychotherapy* 37 (1):49-59.
- Munn, Nancy D. 1992. The cultural anthropology of time - a critical essay. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 21:93-123.
- Munting, Robert. 1996. *An economic and social history of gambling in Britain and the USA*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Musharbash, Jasmine. 2007. Boredom, Time and Modernity: An Example from Aboriginal Australia. *American Anthropologist* 109 (2):307-317.
- Nagel, Thomas. 1993 [1976]. Moral Luck. In *Moral Luck*, edited by D. Statman. New York: State University of New York Press, 57-72.
- Neal, Mark. 1998. 'You lucky punters!' a study of gambling in betting shops. *Sociology* 32:581-600.

- . 2005. 'I lose, but that's not the point': situated economic and social rationalities in horserace gambling. *Leisure studies* 24 (3):291-310.
- Nelson, Julie A. 1995. Feminism and economics. *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 9 (2):131-148.
- Newell, Venetia. 1989. A note on Chinese New Year celebration in London and its socio-economic background. *Western Folklore* 48 (1):61-66.
- Ng, Kwee Choo. 1968. *The Chinese in London*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Nikelly, Arthur. 1992. The pleonexic personality: a new provisional personality disorder. *Individual Psychology* 48:253-260.
- . 2006. The Pathogenesis of greed: causes and consequences. *International Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies* 3 (1):65-78.
- Noseworthy, Theodore J., and Karen Finlay. 2009. A Comparison of Ambient Casino Sound and Music: Effects on Dissociation and on Perceptions of Elapsed Time While Playing Slot Machines. *Journal of Gambling Studies* 25 (3):331-342.
- Nyíri, Pál. 2005. The 'new migrant': state and market constructions of modernity and patriotism. In *China inside out: contemporary Chinese nationalism and transnationalism*, edited by P. Nyíri and J. Breidenbach. Budapest: Central European University Press, 141-176.
- Oei, Tian Po S., James Lin, and Namrata Raylu. 2007. Validation of the Chinese version of the Gambling Related Cognitions Scale (GRCS-C). *Journal of Gambling Studies* 23 (3):309-322.
- . 2007. Validation of the Chinese version of the Gambling Urges Scale (GUS-C). *International Gambling Studies* 7 (1):101-111.
- . 2008. The relationship between gambling cognitions, psychological states, and gambling: a cross-cultural study of Chinese and Caucasians in Australia. *Journal of Cross-cultural Psychology* 39:147-161.
- Oei, Tian Po S., and Namrata Raylu. 2007. *Gambling and problem gambling among the Chinese*. Brisbane: The University of Queensland.
- . 2010. Gambling Behaviours and motivations: a cross-cultural study of Chinese and Caucasians in Australia. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry* 56 (1):23-34.
- Oldman, David. 1974. Chance and Skill: A Study of Roulette. *Sociology* 8 (3):407-426.
- Olwig, Karen Fog. 2002. The ethnographic field revisited: Towards a study of common and not so common fields of belonging. In *Realizing community: concepts, social relationships and sentiments*, edited by V. Amit. London: Routledge, 124-145.
- Ong, Aihwa. 1995. Anthropology, China and modernities: the geopolitics of cultural knowledge. In *The future of anthropological knowledge*, edited by H. L. Moore. London: Routledge, 60-92.
- . 1997. Chinese modernities: narratives of Nation and of Capitalism. In *Ungrounded empires: the cultural politics of modern Chinese transnationalism*, edited by A. Ong and D. Nonini. London: Routledge, 171-201.

- . 1998. *Flexible citizenship: the cultural logics of transnationality*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- . 1999. Clash of civilisation or Asian liberalism? An anthropology of the state and citizenship. In *Anthropological theory today*, edited by H. L. Moore. Cambridge: Polity Press & Blackwell Publishers, 48-72.
- . 2005. Anthropological concepts for the study of nationalism. In *China inside out: contemporary Chinese nationalism and transnationalism*, edited by P. Nyíri and J. Breidenbach. Bugapest: Central European University Press, 1-34.
- . 2006. *Neoliberalism as exception: mutations in citizenship and sovereignty*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Ong, Aihwa, and Donald Nonini. 1997. Chinese transnationalism as an alternative modernity. In *Ungrounded empires: the cultural politics of modern Chinese transnationalism*, edited by A. Ong and D. Nonini. London: Routledge, 3-35.
- Ortner, Sherry B. 1997. Fieldwork in the postcommunity. *Anthropology and humanism* 22 (1):61-80.
- Osella, Filippo, and Caroline Osella. 2006. Once upon a time in the West? Stories of migration and modernity from Kerala, South India. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute (N.S)* 12:569-588.
- Oxfeld, Ellen. 1993. *Blood, sweat, and mahjong: family and enterprise in an overseas Chinese community*. Cornell University Press.
- Ozorio, Bernadete, and Davis Ka-Chio Fong. 2004. Chinese Casino Gambling Behaviors: Risk Taking in Casinos vs. Investment. *UNLV Gaming Research and Review Journal* 8 (2):27-38.
- Pai, Hsiao-Hung. 2008. *Chinese whispers. The true story behind Britain's army of labour*. London: Penguin.
- Pairault, Thierry. 1995. *L'intégration silencieuse: la petite entreprise chinoise en France*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Pan, Lynn. 1990. *Sons of the yellow emperor. The story of the overseas chinese*. London: Secker & Warburg.
- Papataxiarchis, Evthymios. 1999. A contest with money: gambling and the politics of disinterested sociality in Aegan Greece. In *Lilies of the field: marginal people who live for the moment*, edited by S. Day, E. Papataxiarchis and S. Michael. Oxford: Westview Press, 159-175.
- Papineau, Elisabeth. 2001. Le jeu pathologique dans la communauté chinoise, une vision anthropologique. *Loisir et Société, Culture et mode de vie* 24 (2):1-24.
- . 2005. Pathological gambling in Montreal's Chinese community: an anthropological perspective. *Journal of Gambling Studies* 21 (2):157-178.
- . 2007. Chinois joueurs et machines à sous: une équation à deux inconnues. Conference paper. *Espaces, Rituels, Sociétés*; 3ème Congrès du Réseau Asie – IMASIE, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales.
- Parish, Jane. 2006. Witchcraft, riches and roulette. An ethnography of West African gambling in the UK. *Ethnography* 6 (1):105-122.

- Parker, David. 1995. *Through different eyes. The cultural identities of young Chinese people in Britain*. Aldershot: Avebury.
- . 1998. Chinese people in Britain: Histories, futures and identity. In *The Chinese in Europe*, edited by G. Benton and F. N. Pieke. London: Macmillan, 67-95.
- Parry, Jonathan. 1986. The Gift, the Indian gift, and the “Indian gift”. *Man* 21 (3):453-73.
- Parry, Jonathan, and Maurice Bloch. 1989. *Money and the morality of exchange*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Passaro, Joanne. 1997. 'You can't take the subway to the field!': ‘village’ epistemologies in the global village. In *Anthropological Locations*, edited by A. Gupta and J. Ferguson. London: University of California Press, 147-172.
- Paulès, Xavier. 2007. Le *fantan*: une étude préliminaire. Conference paper. Espaces, Rituels, Sociétés; 3ème Congrès du Réseau Asie - IMASIE. Paris: Ecoles des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales.
- . 2010. Gambling in China reconsidered: *fantan* in south China during the early twentieth century. *International Journal of Asian Studies* 7 (2):179-200.
- Pearson, Heath. 2000. *Homo economicus* goes native: 1859-1945: the rise and fall of primitive economics. *History of Political Economy* 32 (4):933.
- Pharoah, Robin, Eona Bell, Hui Zhang, and Yeung Fan. 2009. Migration, integration, cohesion: new Chinese migrants in London. London: The Chinese in Britain Forum.
- Pieke, Frank N. 1998. Introduction The Chinese in Europe. In *The Chinese in Europe*, edited by G. Benton and F. N. Pieke. London: Macmillan.
- . 1999. Introduction: Chinese migrations compared. In *Internal and International migration: Chinese perspectives*, edited by F. Pieke and H. Mallee. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1-26.
- . 2007. Editorial introduction: community and identity in the new Chinese migration order. *Population, Space and Place* 13:81-94.
- Pieke, Frank N., and Hein Mallee, eds. 1999. *Internal and international migration: Chinese perspectives*. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press.
- Pieke, Frank N., Pál Nyíri, Mette Thunø, and Antonella Ceccagno. 2004. *Transnational Chinese: Fujianese Migrants in Europe*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Pomeroy, Brian. 30 June 2009. Letter to Gerry Sutcliffe, high-stake high-price and other gaming machines. London: Gambling Commission.
- Postill, John. 2002. Clock and Calendar Time: A Missing Anthropological Problem. *Time and Society* 11 (2-3):251-270.
- Poston, L. Dudley Jr., and Mei-Yu Yu. 1990. The distribution of overseas Chinese in the contemporary world. *International Migration Review* 24 (3):480-508.
- Prus, Robert. 2004. Gambling as activity: subcultural life-worlds, personal intrigues and persistent involvement. *Journal of Gambling Issues* (10). <http://jgi.camh.net/doi/abs/10.4309/jgi.2004.10.9>

- Rachlin, Howard. 1990. Why do people gamble and keep gambling despite heavy losses? *American Psychological Society* 1 (5):294-297.
- Raphals, Lisa. 2003. Fate, fortune, chance, and luck in Chinese and Greek: a comparative semantic history. *Philosophy East & West* 53 (4):537-574.
- Rarick, Charles A. 2007. Confucius on management: understanding Chinese cultural values and managerial practices. *Journal of International Management* 2 (2). http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1082092
- Raylu, Namrata, and Tan P.S. Oei. 2001. Pathological gambling: a comprehensive review. *Clinical Psychological Review* 22 (7):1009-1061.
- Raylu, Namrata, and Tian Po S. Oei. 2004. Role of culture in gambling and problem gambling. *Clinical Psychology Review* 23 (8):1087-1114.
- Reader, Ian, and George Joji Tanabe. 1998. *Practically religious: worldly benefits and the common religion of Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Reid, R.L. 1986. The psychology of the near miss. *Journal of Gambling Studies* 2 (1): 32-39.
- Reith, Gerda. 2002. *The age of chance: gambling in western culture*. London: Routledge.
- . 2006. Research on the social impact of gambling. Scottish Executive Social Research.
- . 2007. Gambling and the contradiction of consumption: a genealogy of the 'pathological' subject. *American Behavioral Scientist* 51 (1):33-55.
- Riches, David. 1975. Cash, credit and gambling in a modern Eskimo economy: speculations on origins on spheres of economic exchange. *Man* (N.S.) 10 (1):21-33.
- Ricketts, Martin. 2006. Theories of entrepreneurship: historical development and critical assessment. In *The Oxford Handbook of Entrepreneurship*, edited by M. Casson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 33-58.
- Ricoeur, Paul. 1980. Narrative time. *Critical Inquiry* 7 (1):169-190.
- Ries, Nancy. 1997. *Russian talk: culture and conversation during Perestroika*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Rivera, Annamaria. 2000. Idées racistes. In *L'imbroglia ethnique*, edited by R. Gallisot, M. Kilani and A. Rivera. Lausanne: Edition Payot, 116-131.
- Robertson, Alexander F. 2001. *Greed: gut feelings, growth, and history*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Rodman, Margaret C. 2003. Empowering place: multilocality and multivocality. In *The anthropology of space and place: locating culture*, edited by S. M. Low and D. Lawrence-Zúñiga. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 204-223.
- Rolandson, Unn Målfrid H. 2008. A collective of their own: young volunteers at the fringes of the party realm. *European Journal of East Asian Studies* 7 (1):101-129.
- Rose, Nikolas. 1996. *Inventing our selves: psychology, power, and personhood*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Rosecrance, John. 1985. Compulsive gambling and the medicalisation of deviance. *Social Problems* 32 (3):275-284.
- . 1986. Adapting to failure: the case of horse race gamblers. *Journal of Gambling Behaviour* 2 (2):81-94.
- . 1988. Professional horse race gambling: working without a safety net. *Work and occupations* 15 (2):220-236.
- Said, Edward. 1978. *Orientalism: Western conceptions of the Orient*. New York: Pantheon.
- Sales, Rosemary, Panos Hatziprokopiou, Fleming Christiansen, Alessio D'Angelo, Xiuqing Liang, Xia Lin, and Nicola Montagna. 2009. London's Chinatown: diaspora, identity, belonging. Working paper series. Social Policy Research Centre, Middlesex University.
- Sangren, Steven. 2008. Fate and agency in Chinese ritual and cosmology: from meaning to desire. Conference paper. Economies of fortune and luck, perspectives from inner Asia and beyond. Cambridge University.
- Schumaker, John F. 2004. In greed we trust. *New Internationalist Magazine* 370. <http://www.newint.org/columns/essays/2004/07/01/greed/>
- Schwartz, David G. 2003. *Suburban Xanadu: the casino resort on the Las Vegas strip and beyond*. New York, London: Routledge.
- Schüll, Natasha Dow. 2001. Oasis/Mirage: fantasies of nature in Las Vegas. *Critical Studies* 15:377-402.
- . 2005. Digital gambling: the coincidence of desire and design. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 597 (1):65-81.
- . 2006. Machines, medication, modulation: circuits of dependency and self-care in Las Vegas. *Culture, Medecine, Psychiatry* 30 (2):223-247.
- Seed, John. 2006. Limehouse Blues: Looking for Chinatown in the London Docks, 1900–40. *History Workshop Journal* 62 (1):58-85.
- Sexton, Lorraine. 1987. The social construction of card playing among the Daalo. *Oceania* 58 (1):38-46.
- Seymour, Richard. 1754. *The compleat gamester*. London: J. Hodges.
- Shang, Anthony. 1984. *The Chinese in Britain*. London: Batsford Academic and Educational.
- Simmel, Georg. 1990 [1900]. *The philosophy of money*. London: Routledge.
- . 2003. The miser and the spendthrift. In *Wealth and poverty in America: a reader*, edited by D. Conley.
- Sin, Ricky. 1997. Gambling and problem gambling among Chinese adults in Québec: an exploratory study. Québec, Canada: Chinese Family Service of Great Montréal.
- Skinner, William G. 1968. Overseas Chinese leadership: paradigm for a paradox. In *Leadership and Authority*, edited by G. Wijeyewardene. Singapore: University of Malaysia Press.

- Slade, Peter, and Chris McConville. 2003. The problem with problem gambling: historical and economic concerns. *Journal of Economic and Social Policy* 8 (1):Article 1.
- Sorkin, Michael. 1992a. See you in Disneyland. *Design Quarterly* (154):5-13.
- , ed. 1992b. *Variations on a theme park: the new American city and the end of public space*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Spacks, Patricia Ann Meyer. 1995. *Boredom: the literary history of a state of mind*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Stafford, Charles. 2007. What is going to happen next? In *Questions of anthropology*, edited by R. Astuti, J. Parry and C. Stafford. Oxford: Berg, 55-76.
- Statman, Daniel. 1993. *Introduction*. Edited by D. Statman, *Moral Luck*. New York: State University of New York Press, 1-34.
- Steinmüller, Hans. 2009. Everyday moralities: family, work, ritual and the local state in rural China, unpublished thesis, London School of Economics and Political Science.
- Stewart, Alex. 1991. A prospectus on the anthropology of entrepreneurship. *Journal of entrepreneurship and practice* 16 (2):71-92.
- Stewart, Michael. 1994. La passion de l'argent. Les ambiguïtés de la circulation monétaire chez les Tsiganes Hongrois. *Terrain* 23: 45-62.
- Stites, Richard W. 1985. Industrial work as an entrepreneurial strategy. *Modern China* 11 (2):227-246.
- Stoller, Paul, and Jasmin Tahmaseb McConatha. 2001. City Life: West African Communities in New York. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 30 (6):651-677.
- Strange, Susan. 1997 [1986]. *Casino Capitalism*. Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press.
- Strathern, Marilyn. 1988. *The gender of the gift: Problems with women and problems with society in Melanesia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- . 1992. *After nature: English kinship in the late twentieth century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Suissa, Amnon Jacob. 2006. Gambling addiction as an individual pathology: a commentary. *International journal of mental health and addiction* 4 (3):195-199.
- Sévigny, Serge, and Robert Ladouceur. 2003. Gamblers' irrational thinking about chance events: the 'double switching' concept. *International Gambling Studies* 3 (2):149-161.
- Tang, Catherine So-kum, Anise M.S. Wu, and Joe Y.C. Tang. 2007. Gender differences in characteristics of Chinese treatment-seeking problem gamblers. *Journal of Gambling Studies* 23 (2).
- Tang, Catherine So-kum, Anise Wu, Joe Tang, and Elsie W. Yan. 2010. Reliability, validity, and cut scores of the South Oaks Gambling Screen (SOGS) for Chinese. *Journal of Gambling Studies* 26 (1):145-158.

- Taylor, Monica. 1987. Chinese pupils in Britain: a review of research into the education of pupils of Chinese origin. Windsor: Nfer-Nelson.
- Thompson, E.P. 1967. Time, work-discipline, and industrial capitalism. *Past and Present* 38:56-97.
- Thrift, Nigel. 1990 [1980]. From 'owners' time and own Time: the making of a capitalist time consciousness, 1300-1880. In *The sociology of time*, edited by J. Hassard. London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 105-129.
- Thrift, Nigel, and Paul Glennie. 1996. Reworking E. P. Thompson's 'Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism'. *Time and society* 5 (3):275-299.
- . 2009. *Shaping the day: a history of timekeeping in England and Wales in 1300-1800*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Thrift, Nigel, and Jon May. 2001. *TimeSpace: geographies of temporality*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Thøgersen, Stig, and Ni Anru. 2008. 'He is He, and I Am I': Individual and Collective among China's Rural Elderly. *European Journal of East Asian Studies* 7 (1):11-37.
- Till, Jeremy. 1996. Architecture in space, time. In *Architecture and anthropology*, edited by C. Melhuish. London: Academy Editions, 9-12.
- Timbs, John. 1866. *Clubs and club life in London: with anecdotes of its famous coffee houses, hostelryes, and taverns from the seventeenth century to the present time*. Vol. 1. London: Richard Bentley.
- Tjon Sie Fat, Paul B. 2009. *Chinese new migrants in Suriname: the inevitability of ethnic performativity*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Toneatto, Tony. 1999. Cognitive psychopathology of problem gambling. *Substance Use and Misuse* 34 (11):1593-1604.
- Toneatto, Tony, Tamara Blitz-Miller, Kim Calderwood, Rosa Dragonetti, and Andrea Tsanos. 1997. Cognitive distortions in heavy gambling. *Journal of gambling studies* 13 (3):253-266.
- Toyota, Mika. 2003. Contested Chinese identities among ethnic minorities in the China, Burma and Thai borderlands. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 26 (2):301-320.
- Tran, Diana. 1999. Asian gambling, family losses: a study of gambling related violence in the Vietnamese community. Richmond, Australia: Jesuit Social Services.
- Tremon, Anne-Christine. 2005. The articulation of different rationalities between Tahiti Chinese and Raiatean Tahitians. *Taiwan Journal of Anthropology* 13 (2):23-44.
- Trevorrow, Karen, and Susan Moore. 1998. The association between loneliness, isolation and women's electronic gaming machine gambling. *The journal of gambling studies* 14 (3):263-284.
- Tse, Samson, John Wong, and Hyeun Kim. 2004. A public health approach for Asian people with problem gambling in foreign countries. *Journal of Gambling Issues* (12). <http://jgi.camh.net/doi/abs/10.4309/jgi.2004.12.13>.
- Tu, Weiming, ed. 1996. *Confucian traditions in east Asian modernity: moral education and economic culture in Japan and the four mini-dragons*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- . 2005 Cultural China: the periphery as the center, *Daedalus* 134 (4): 145-167.
- Tönnies, Ferdinand. 1944. *Communauté et société. Catégories fondamentales de la sociologie pure*. Paris: Presses universitaire de France.
- Veblen, Thorstein. 1970 [1915]. *The theory of leisure class: an economic study of institutions*. London: Allen and Unwin.
- Ventura, Reynald. B. 1992. *Underground in Japan*. Quezo City: Ateneo de Manila University Press.
- Wagner, Roy. 1991. The fractal person. In *Big men and great men: personifications of power in Melanesia*, edited by M. Godelier and M. Strathern. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 159-174.
- . 2008. The Lottery in Babylon: The Mathematics of Happenstance. Conference paper. Economies of fortune and luck, perspectives from inner Asia and beyond. Cambridge University.
- Walker, Michael B. 1992. Irrational thinking among slot machines players. *Journal of Gambling Studies* 8 (3):245-261.
- . 1996. The medicalization of gambling as an addiction. In *Gambling Cultures: Studies in history and Interpretation*, edited by J. McMillen. London: Routledge, 223-242.
- Walsh, Andrew. 2003. 'Hot money' and daring consumption in a northern Malagasy sapphire-mining town. *American Ethnologist* 30 (2):290-305.
- Wang, Gungwu. 2004a. A single Chinese diaspora? In *Diasporic Chinese ventures: the life and work of Wang Wungwu*, edited by G. H. Benton, Liu. London: Routledge.
- . 2004b. New migrants: how new? why new? In *Diasporic Chinese ventures: the life and work of Wang Wungwu*, edited by G. Benton and L. Hong. London: Routledge.
- Watson, James L. 1975. *Emigration and the Chinese lineage: the Mans in Hong Kong and London*. Vol. University of California Press: Berkeley, California.
- . 1977. The Chinese: Hong Kong villagers in the British catering trade. In *Between two cultures*, edited by J. L. Watson. Oxford: Basil Backwell, 181-213.
- Weber, Max. 2003 [1905]. *The Protestant ethic and the "spirit" of capitalism*. New York: Dover publications.
- Wei, Shen. 2005. A study on Chinese student migration in the United Kingdom. *Asia Europe Journal* 3 (3):429-436.
- Williams, Bernard. 1993 [1976]. Moral Luck. In *Moral Luck*, edited by D. Statman. New York: State University of New York Press, 35-56.
- Wong, Bernard P. 2006. *The Chinese in Silicon Valley: Globalisation, social networks, and ethnic identity*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Wong, John, and Samson Tse. 2003. The face of Chinese migrants' gambling: A perspective from New Zealand. *Journal of Gambling Issues* (9), <http://jgi.camh.net/doi/abs/10.4309/jgi.2003.9.7>.

- Wong, Raymond Sin-Kwok. 2008. A new breed of Chinese entrepreneurs? Critical reflections. In *Chinese entrepreneurship in a global era*, edited by R. S.-K. Wong. Oxon: Routledge, 3-26.
- Woodburn, James. 1982. Egalitarian societies. Malinowski Memorial Lecture, London School of Economics and Political Science.
- Woolley, Richard, and Charles Livingstone. 2009. Into the zone: innovating in the Australian poker machine industry. In *Global gambling: cultural perspectives on gambling organisations*, edited by S. Kingma. London, New York: Routledge, 38-63.
- Yan, Yunxiang. 1996. The culture of *guanxi* in a North China village. *The China journal* 35:1-25.
- . 2003. *Private life under socialism. Love, intimacy, and family change in a Chinese village 1949-1999*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- . 2005. The individual and transformation of bridewealth in rural North China. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (N.S.) 11 (4):637-658.
- . 2008. Introduction: Understanding the rise of the individual in China. *European Journal of East Asian Studies* 7 (1):1-9.
- . 2009a. The Good Samaritan's new trouble: A study of the changing moral landscape in contemporary China. *Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale* 17 (1):9-24.
- . 2009b. *The individualisation of Chinese society*. Oxford, New York: Berg.
- Yeung, Henry Wai-Chung. 2008. Hybrid capitalism: a new breed of Chinese entrepreneurs in a global era. In *Chinese entrepreneurs in a global era*, edited by R. S.-K. Wong. Oxon: Routledge, 29-51.
- Yueh, Linda. 2008. China's entrepreneurs. *CentrePiece* 13 (1):15-18.
- Zaloom, Caitlin. 2004. The productive life of risk. *Cultural Anthropology* 19 (3):365-391.
- . 2006. *Out of the pits*. Chicago: the University of Chicago Press.
- Zelizer, Viviana. 1994. *The social meaning of money*. New York: Basic Books.
- Zhang, Hui. 2010. Windfall wealth and envy in three Chinese mining villages, unpublished thesis, London School of Economics and Political Science.
- Zhang, Li. 2001. *Strangers in the city: Reconfigurations of space, power, and social networks within China's floating population*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Zhang, Li, and Aihwa Ong, eds. 2008. *Privatizing China: socialism from afar*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Zhang, Mei. 2001. From Lei Feng to Zhang Haidi: changing images of model youth in the post-Mao reform era. In *Civil discourses, civil society, and Chinese communities*, edited by R. Kluver and J. H. Powers. Stamford, Connecticut: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 111-124.

- Zheng, Wu Yi, Michael Walker, and Alex Blaszczyński. 2009. Mahjong Gambling in the Chinese-Australian Community in Sydney: A Prevalence Study. *Journal of Gambling Studies* 26 (3):441-454.
- Zimmer, Laura. 1986. Card playing among the Gende: a system for keeping money and social relationships alive. *Oceania* 56 (4):245-263.
- Zola, Irvin Kenneth 1967. Observations on gambling in a Lower-Class Setting. In *Gambling*, edited by R. Herman. New York: Harper and Row.